THE

BELIEVER'S TREASURY.

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THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS REPRINTED AT THE DESIRE OF ONE WHO IS

NOW GONE TO HER REST,

AND IS DEDICATED LOVINGLY TO HER

MEMORY.

PREFACE.

THERE is no difficulty in stating the truths of revelation in a manner as incapable of logical refutation, as those of any branch of morals. But although in this manner the judgment of men would be convinced of their abstract qualities, and the mouth of the caviller would be stopped, the heart would remain as unmoved as before, and the affections be as little drawn into kindred sentiments with those of their Eternal Author. The powers of men's intellect vary considerably in different individuals, but the hearts and consciences of all men are extremely alike. On this account it is, no doubt, that very few portions of scripture are given in an argumentative form, but mostly in a manner to appeal to the affections of mankind: hence the apostle Paul speaks of the inefficacy of "the enticing words of man's wisdom," or the charms of human eloquence; and prefers addressing men, whose hearts he wished to convert, with great plainness of speech. In the following pages, no attempt is made at proving any of the positions

which are advanced, but they are brought forward merely to direct the reader to the consideration of the various branches of the subject for himself; that he may judge from the Divine Oracles themselves, how far they are consistent with the revelation of Jehovah.

As the enmity of the natural mind to the truths of God is perhaps never overcome perfectly, even in the holiest of the saints here on earth, it is not to be expected but that the truths here brought forward will meet with much cavilling, not only from those whose hearts are still alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, but even from some whose faces are nevertheless set Zion-ward. It may, perhaps, be thought that had the following observations been couched in language more congenial to the refinements of the present day, the truths intended to be pointed out, would have gained a more general acquiescence. But, however plausible such an idea may be, neither experience, nor the words of scripture afford any justification to it. Those who love the truth, will love it in whatever dress they find it arrayed; whilst those who love it not, would equally object to it with whatever outward form of loveliness it appeared.

It may, perhaps, be advisable to inform the reader of the cause of drawing up this Treatise; in so doing the method in which it is proposed to treat the subject, will be also most clearly shown.

Some time after the writer was satisfied concerning the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, doubts occurred to him respecting its consistency with Divine Justice. It was suggested that there was no equity in one man's suffering the punishment due to transgression in the place of another; that such a proceeding was not only contrary to our ordinary notions of equity, but contrary also to the declarations of scripture, which say, expressly, that the righteous shall not suffer for the wicked; but that every man's sin should be charged upon his own head, &c., &c. This difficulty could not be resolved into the sovereignty of God, which supposes him to act according to the good pleasure of his own will, while he giveth no account of these matters to any of his creatures, because God can will nothing but what is just and equitable. Sometimes the willingness of Christ to suffer was pleaded as a proof of the justice of the Father to inflict; but this plea was unsatisfactory, inasmuch as the submission of any person to sustain an act of injustice does not render the act itself just. No better arguments than these being to be gathered from such writers as were consulted, it was resolved to search the Scriptures alone, submitting in spirit unto him who had first dictated, and hath taken upon himself to make us understand them. While engaged in this investigation, the union of Christ and the church, seemed to furnish a key to the complete harmony of those parts

which appeared before so discordant; and the manner in which it does so, is attempted to be set forth in the following Treatise. Thus Jesus Christ having been found a retreat from the enemy, who by obtruding doubts would have shaken the foundations of the faith, this statement is published that it may be of use to all those who are assailed in a similar manner. At the same time it is admitted, that, amongst the mass even of Christians, there are but too few who enquire into the merits of the cause in which they are engaged; to whom no doubts ever suggest themselves; and who, unable to give a reason of the hope that is in them, have received as much of the truth as they know merely from human teachers. There are others, also, who, simply crediting the Scripture testimony, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, are happy in that truth without once enquiring into the equity of it, or thinking it necessary so to do. May the peace of the former be confirmed, and that of the latter increased, without being disturbed!

It is almost useless to combat, in this place, the opposition which the following statement must meet with, in common with every other declaration of the free and undeserved favour of God, namely, that it is inimical to the practice of good works. But it may be briefly observed, that the meaning of the term "good works,"

ought to be accurately defined, before the objection can be fairly discussed. No one can be an enemy of such things as he really considers to be good works; but when such things are spoken of in connection with Scripture, it is necessary to distinguish between those which are morally, and those that are spiritually good. The former, which respect beneficence one towards another, as reasonable beings, as fellow creatures, and sharers of the same troubles, pains, and sorrows, are no doubt, as the apostle says, "good and profitable unto men;" but the latter, which merit the Divine approbation, mankind are utterly incapable of performing at any time, but as they are created anew in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii, 10. As friends to justice, benevolence, and peace among men, we ought to encourage such dispositions and the good works which they produce, by every means in our power. But when men speak of these things as being spiritually good, well-pleasing and acceptable to God, as if they were in themselves the cause of righteousness, holiness, and fruitfulness in his eyes, then it is necessary to expose all this delusive righteousness to be no better than an abomination in the sight of God; and against bringing the halt, the blind, and the lame into the service of the sanctuary. It is thus testifying against the misapplication of good works, a misapplication which robs the Lord Jesus Christ of the fulness of his redemption, and subverts the immortal

interests of mankind, that excites the enmity of the world; according to the declaration of our Lord, who says, "The world hateth me because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil."

Among all the individuals of Adam's race, there is but one man, even the man Christ Jesus, of whose works I can entirely approve, and whose example I entirely admire. By his example I am penetrated with the most profound admiration; and although I see *that* in him, unto which I not only cannot attain, but which it would be the highest arrogance in me, or any other mortal to expect to reach, yet I must ever reverence, admire, and wonder before him. When I except this Peerless One, I believe the word of the Lord, which says of all others, that "the best of them is as a brier," and "the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge:" Micah vii, 4. "For every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders:" Jer. ix, 4.

Wherever then good words are spoken against, it is because a goodness is attributed to them, which cannot belong to them, and therefore they are but a false shew, and lying vanity: a further reason is, that their spurious pretensions, gaining ground among mankind, tend to dishonour the gospel of Jesus Christ, and make void the grace of God; they tend to distress the soul that is convinced of the weakness of human nature, according to the

Scriptures, and to keep it from the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

O thou great Archetype of true holiness, Jesus Christ! Thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only with the Holy Ghost art most high in the glory of God the Father! unto thy grace and keeping I commend my all, praying thee to bless what has been written to the glory and praise of thy adored name, and to the conviction of the reader's, to that eternal life which is in Thee.

THE

BELIEVER'S TREASURY.

THE doctrine of Union between Christ and his Church is set forth in the sacred Scriptures in such a manner, as to render the system of man's redemption by his blood beautifully consistent. It makes the Divine perfections appear in perfect harmony with each other, and presents God as acting according to all his revealed attributes in the salvation of mankind by Jesus Christ. This subject, therefore, is greatly worthy of consideration, and the design of the following pages is to examine whatever has been revealed in the word of God concerning it.

All the reasonable hopes and expectations of the creature from the Creator, are founded upon certain declarations which have been made to him from above. God has revealed himself to man, not only as a Being infinitely perfect, but likewise by the attributes of JUSTICE, PURITY, TRUTH, MERCY, and LOVE. It follows, therefore, that we are not to expect any exhibition of MERCY and LOVE, but in a way which shall also be

perfectly consistent with JUSTICE, PURITY, and TRUTH. In the declaration, then, contained in the sacred Scriptures, that God has, from MERCY and LOVE to mankind, punished sin in the person of his Son Jesus Christ, it behoves us to see that there be in this act of MERCY and LOVE, a concurrence of JUSTICE, PURITY, and TRUTH; because if there be a contradiction and inconsistency apparent between these attributes, the reliance of the believer is not, nor can it be, upon the harmonious PERFECTIONS of Jehovah. In order, therefore, to unite all these apparently jarring attributes, it seems to have been the gracious design of the Almighty Author of the written word, to make those declarations of union between Christ and his Church, which it is now proposed to consider.

1. It is said in 2 Chron. xxv, 4, that every man shall die for his own sins; again, in Isaiah iii, 10, that the righteous shall not suffer. "Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings; woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

How then, it may be asked, is it consistent with these declarations of TRUTH, that the pure, holy, harmless, undefiled and spotless Jesus did suffer, and that it was not well with him?

2. It is contrary to justice to afflict the innocent: to punish and destroy the innocent is cruelty and injustice. Yet the black rebellion and crying guilt of

man was charged upon the pure and spotless head of Jesus. The undertaking to have this guilt so charged being voluntary on the part of Christ, does not prove his right to suffer; because it is not his willingness, but the approbation of Divine JUSTICE, which proves his right to the death of the cross. And as the nature and property of JUSTICE is always its own rule of acting, it cannot admit of the innocent being punished, nor of the transgressors being acquitted; for God, the righteous Judge, hath pronounced a *woe unto such who justify the wicked, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.*[1] In the case indeed of debtor and creditor, the law admitted of one man being surety, or bondsman for another; and although this figure be sometimes employed to typify Christ's work, yet one figure must not be confounded and mixed up with another: the suretyship had no connection with crime, and capital offence. Although the non-fulfilment of God's commands be sometimes represented under the figure of a debt due from the servant to his master and his God, the present subject of attention is sin, which cannot be atoned for without the shedding of the blood of the sinner, which punishment JUSTICE must inflict before it can be properly satisfied; nor can it admit of a surety here, because it can only punish him whom it finds guilty: and that, (not reckoning him to be what he is not, according to human quibbles, but) according to artless,

[1] Isaiah v, 22, 23.

divine equity, which can only declare such guilty on whom the fault is found, and can only find the fault on such who have committed it.

How then is the punishment of Christ, and the pardon of sinners, consistent with JUSTICE?

3. MERCY cannot, consistently with its own nature, manifest itself in a way of unmercifulness. Though there may be an appearance of MERCY towards those who deserve punishment, in inflicting that punishment upon another in their stead, yet there is such a want of MERCY towards that other undeserving person, that the quality destroys itself in its own exercise. Where, then, is the manifestation of the MERCY of God towards Jesus Christ?

4. The Scriptures are very explicit in declaring the Father's love to the Son; but the punishment of this Son for crimes which he did not commit, implies a defect in love; yea, rather greater love to man, the offender, than to his well beloved Son in whom his soul delighted.

Now the Union of Christ and his Church affords an explanation of the above mentioned discrepancies; without which, a great part of the Scriptures would want a key, and be altogether unintelligible. It is not intended to quote all the passages which speak positively of this truth, and the following will suffice for the present purpose.

"In thy book were all my members written.[1] We

[1] Psa. cxxxix, 16.

are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.[1] Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.[2] For, as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so is Christ.[3] Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.[4] He is the head of the body, the church.[5] The head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.[6] Ye are complete in him.[7] We being many are one body in Christ, and members one of another.[8] And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.[9] And they two shall be one flesh; this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his church.[10] For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.[11] And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.[12] And the vessel that he made of clay, was marred in the hand of the potter, so he made it again another vessel, as it seemed good unto the potter to make it.[13] She was delivered of a man

[1] Eph. v, 20. [2] 1 Cor. xii, 26. [3] 1 Cor xii, 12. [4] 1 Cor. xii, 27.
[5] Col. i, 18. [6] Eph. i, 22, 23. [7] Col. ii, 10. [8] Rom. xii, 5.
[9] Eph. ii, 31, 32. [10] Eph. v, 31, 32. [11] Heb. ii, 11.
[12] John xvii, 22. [13] Jer. xviii, 4.

child. Who hath heard such things? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, shall a nation be born at once?[1] In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.[2] Buried with him in baptism.[3] I am crucified with Christ.[4] Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.[5] Knowing this, that your old man is crucified with him.[6] Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.[7] Dead to the law by the body of Christ.[8] If we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him.[9] Reckon yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.[10] God hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.[11]

"Now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death.[12] Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Christ.[13] God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.[14] And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ.[15] Even when we were

[1] Isa. lxvi, 7, 8. [2] Col. ii, 11. [3] Col. ii, 12. [4] Gal. ii, 20.
[5] 1 Pet. ii, 24. [6] Rom. vi, 6. [7] Col. iii, 3. [8] Rom, vii, 4.
[9] Rom. vi, 8. [10] Rom. vi, 11. [11] 1 Pet. i, 3. [12] Col. i, 21, 22.
[13] 1 Pet. iii, 21. [14] 2 Cor. v, 19. [15] Eph. ii, 6.

dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.[1] And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.[2] Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him.[3] Because as He is, so are we in this world.[4] Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.[5] He hath made us accepted in the beloved.[6] Israel hath he saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.[7] This is the name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.[8] This is the name whereby she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.[9] To them who are sanctified in Christ Jesus.[10] But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord."[11]

It is needless to quote more passages than these for the purpose which has been above stated, namely, to shew that there is a clear and decided declaration of

[1] Eph. ii, 5. [2] Col. ii, 13. [3] Eph. i, 3, 4. [4] 1 John iii, 2.
[5] 2 Tim. i, 9. [6] Eph. i, 6. [7] Isa. xlv, 17. [8] Jer. xxiii, 6.
[9] Jer. xxxiii, 16. [10] 1 Cor. i, 2. [11] 1 Cor. i, 30.

a Union subsisting between Christ and his Church, which declaration is made in direct terms, and also conveyed through the medium of a variety of images.

Among these various images it will be proper to follow up some few of them through their details, when it will be found that the holy Scriptures are extremely minute in them.

The apostle teaches us, that Adam was a figure of him who was to come.[1] Moses tells us, that when God created man, male and female created he them, and called their name Adam in the day when they were created.[2] Thus were the twain created in one, the woman in her husband, where they had one name given them. He called *their* name Adam. It was whilst the person of Adam was plural, as containing the woman in himself that God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, &c.:[3] and when the Lord God (causing a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and taking the rib from his side, of which he made the woman) afterwards brought her out unto him, Adam said, this is NOW bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called *woman*, because she was taken out of the *man*.[4] *Thus her existing in distinct personality, did not prevent her union to the man.* The twain were thus created in one, the woman in her husband.

In a manner similar to this, it is declared that the church existed in Christ; "according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,[5]

[1] Rom. v, 14. [2] Gen. v, 2. [3] Gen. i, 28. [4] Gen. ii, 23. [5] Eph. i, 4.

—having this purpose and grace given us in him before the world began.[1] The man and the woman had but one name: he called THEIR name, Adam; so Christ and his Church bear one name; both are called the Lord our righteousness. He in Jer. xxiii, 6; she in Jer. xxxiii, 16. We are called the righteousness of God in him.[2] Many other titles applied equally to Christ and to the church, are to be found in all parts of the Scriptures. The Lord God *covenanting with Adam* as the head of the earthly creation, as having the woman in himself, *drew a figure* of his *covenant with Christ* as having the church existing in Him: He is the head engaging for his members, as the husband for his wife, as the king for his subjects, as the root for its branches, &c., which covenant was afterwards confirmed of God in Christ, when he sware unto Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The promises made unto him are all yea and amen in him,[3] in him declared, in him fulfilled upon all its members. Adam, having the woman in himself, manifesting his wisdom in naming the creatures, and withal his dominion over them, was the wisdom of his wife and her honourable exaltation in point of dominion: so Jesus, having the church in himself in all the displays of his wisdom, is the wisdom of the church.[4] Eve, when taken from Adam into a *distinct consciousness of existence*, was not less related to him than when she was only a rib in his

[1] 2 Tim. i, 9. [2] 2 Cor. v, 21. [3] 2 Cor. i, 20. [4] 1 Cor. i, 30.

side, as appears from Adam's testimony, she is *now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.* In like manner *the church,* when put forth in the *creation of Adam* into a *personality distinct from her head and husband, Christ,* was not less united to him, than when she existed only in him, which she did before the earthly man was created. *Thus* are we *members* of his *body,* of his *flesh,* and of his *bones.*[1] After this manner did the beginning of the creation of God preach Jesus; and thus did the union of Adam with his spouse represent that of Christ with his Church.

The next point to which I would direct the reader's attention, as explanatory of this divine union, is the fall of Adam, and of the world in him. The apostle tells us that Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression;[2] nevertheless, neither is the *man without the woman,* neither the *woman without the man in the Lord.*[3] It is hence to be gathered that Adam was not deceived in his own person, but that knowing what Eve had done, and seeing their mutual ruin inevitable, he voluntarily put himself into her condition, by receiving the fruit from her hands. Such was his love to his wife; and, as they were not, although distinct *in person, without each other in the Lord,* her transgression extended to him: so that his union to her, made it equitable for the curse and condemnation of her folly to fall upon him, although without his consent to, and compliance

[1] Eph. v, 30. [2] 1 Tim. ii, 14. [3] 1 Cor. xi, 11.

with her. In like manner, Christ, the Husband, was not deceived, but his wife, the church, being deceived, was in the transgression: yet as the union was such, that Christ was *not without the church,* nor the church *without him* at any time, it was equitable for her curse and condemnation to fall upon him. Moreover, such was his love unto his spouse, that he voluntarily *put himself into her condition,* when he appeared in the *likeness of sinful flesh,* tempted in every point like her, that he might compassionate her ignorance and wanderings, and be touched with a feeling of her infirmities. The Scriptures farther affirm, that, by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation:[1] whence it is evident that, in Adam's offence, all offended; which supposes such a union between Adam and his offspring, that his sin was their sin, and his ruin their ruin: thus by his offence were they made sinners; whilst they, included in him were in a state of passiveness, and he the active consciousness of the whole.

Common experience bears witness to the truth of the scripture declaration, that Adam's sin has reached to the ends of the earth, and corrupted the whole mass of mankind. Such a union as subsisted between Adam and his offspring, rendering his sin theirs, subsisted also between Jesus and his seed, rendering *his condition theirs;* for as by one man's offence many were made sinners, so by the obedience

[1] Rom. v, 18.

of one shall many be made righteous.[1] The Scriptures, here shewing the manner in which the posterity of Adam are interested in his transgression, and the posterity of Christ interested in his righteousness, illustrate the latter by the former, intimating that as sin came upon all Adam's posterity by his single act, before they had any capacity for sinning after the similitude of his transgression, or of personal concurrence with him in his iniquity, sin must have so come upon them in consequence of their being so united to him, so included in him, as rendered his condition theirs, in whatever state he was; hence his sin, its curse, and fruit, was theirs before they felt it, knew it, or ever were conscious of existence: thus by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. In a similar manner Christ's righteousness is upon all his seed by his single act, before they had any capacity for obeying after the similitude of his obedience, or of assenting to what he did or suffered. This manifests such a union to him, such an inclusion of the whole seed in him, as renders his condition theirs in every state through which he passes; insomuch that his righteousness, with all its concomitant blessings and fruits, is theirs before they have known it, believed it, or were conscious even of their own existence. Thus, by the obedience of one many are made righteous; for as *in* Adam all die, even so *in* Christ shall all be made alive;[2] as all died

[1] Rom. v, 19. [2] 1 Cor. xv, 22.

and were lost *in* Adam when he was caught in the toils of sin and death, it is evident that they were then *in* him, then united to him; so that his sin was their sin, his death their death; as is Adam, so is Christ; his children united *in* him in all he did, and suffered, saved *in* him, redeemed *in* him, beloved *in* him, baptized, crucified, risen, ascended, and seated with him in heavenly places, &c.

Let us now proceed to consider how far Aaron clothed with the garments of his priesthood, be a figure of Christ and his Church united. It cannot be denied that Aaron was a type of Christ; nor that the garment was a figure of the church, as attending circumstances sufficiently prove. The different colours and materials in the garment, denote the many nations, languages, kindreds and tongues, gathered into the body of the Lamb, where Jew and Gentile are reconciled, and both made one. Aaron's garment was so contrived, that he should bear the names of the people upon his shoulders, engraven upon the stones of memorial. His bearing them on his shoulders, signifies his carrying their names, persons, and burdens through the whole office in which he officiated. Thus Jesus says of his Church that, he bare them and carried them all the days of old.[1] The names of the people were also engraven on the breastplate of judgment which Aaron bore on his heart, implying his tender concern and care for their

[1] Isa. lxiii, 9.

welfare: and how careful Jesus is for the welfare of the people, let his humbled and sorrowful life, his sharp dolorous sufferings, his shameful and bloody death upon the accursed tree bear witness. Their names being engraved on precious stones, denotes, first, the value of them, since the most valuable of gems were appointed to receive the engraving. The everlasting durableness of their names was hinted here also, stones being ordained to bear them which were of such a nature as not to admit of their being erased. This also leads to Jesus who says, Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.[1] Aaron could not be consecrated until he had the garment on him; neither could Jesus officiate as the High-priest and Saviour of the people, without taking upon him the nature of the seed of Abraham;[2] it being necessary that he, as an High-priest, should have somewhat to offer. When Aaron had his garments on him, he was anointed, and not before; it was then the precious ointment was poured on his head, and running down his beard, reached the hem of his garment; concerning which oil, the Lord saith, upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it after the composition, it is holy; and it shall be holy unto you: whosoever compoundeth any thing like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall be cut off from his people.[3] This oil answers to the unction which is

[1] Isa. xlix, 16. [2] Heb. ii, 16. [3] Exod. xxx, 32, 33.

from the Holy One, the anointing of which guides us into all truth; that washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.[1]

Jesus when anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, was clothed with the people, they being anointed in him. Behold how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity; it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment.[2] The composition like unto this forbidden by the Lord, is a compound of such virtues, amiable qualities, gracious dispositions, &c., as are thought to abound in man distinct from the consideration of union with Christ, and of being anointed in him. Men profess themselves anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, imputing every change of sentiment and behaviour to the immediate influence of the Divine Spirit; and thus judging of spiritual things by their own passions and fleshly reformations, they may be said to pour the oil upon the flesh of man, yea, upon the stranger, contrary to the Divine institution. Aaron was to have his garment on when he ministered in holy things, nor was he to enter the holy place without it, lest he died; and it was to him for glory, and for beauty—a true representation of Jesus clothed with the people, when by himself he purged our sin, offering himself up unto

[1] Tit. iii, 5, 6. [2] Psa. cxxxiii, 1, 2.

God through the eternal Spirit, having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself: and as by union to him they were crucified with him; so also being risen with him, he entered not into the holy place without them; but, like Aaron, he entered wearing the people into the immediate presence of God, and there presenting himself, said, behold I and the children whom God hath given me. For when Aaron entered the holy place with blood in his hand, (the names of the people sparkling upon his breastplate before the face of God,) the blood which he then offered, was respected, in justice, as the very blood of the offending people, whose names being engraven on the garment, were then present, and, sparkling, were seen in the blood, by Divine justice, there rendering a reason of their expectation from the mercy-seat. On this account was the breastplate called the breastplate of judgment; because, by what was there represented, it is evident that mercy was expected in a way of judgment, that the song might be of mercy and judgment.

The very same union (with as much reality as the substance hath above the shadow) is there between the sufferings and blood of Jesus, and the people; that blood and wounded form, with which he entered into the holiest of all, and in which he still appears as a lamb who hath been slain, relates so truly to the seed of Abraham, whom he took upon him as a garment, who were contained in his body as members

thereof, of his flesh and of his bones, as to be in justice respected as their own blood, shed for their sins; and a sufficient reason rendered of their faith in, and their hopes from, the mercy-seat.

Many other illustrations might be suggested out of the writings of Moses and the prophets to those who are well read in them; but as this treatise may fall into the hands of persons not sufficiently conversant with the sacred books to make such illustrations intelligible without greater diffuseness than is desirable, let us rather consider what the New Testament says upon this subject, as it uses greater plainness of speech. Our Saviour teacheth this union under the similitude of a vine and its branches; I am the vine ye are the branches.[1] Where our Saviour takes upon himself this appellation, the vine, he is to be understood as speaking of himself according to his human nature; hence he is called the plant of renown.[2] The plant which the heavenly Father hath planted,[3] wherein his husbandry appears. When the stock, or set is first planted, there are no branches thereon; nevertheless the husbandman knowing its seed to be in itself, planteth in hope, being well assured of its putting forth its branches and bearing fruit thereon in due season; all his skill, care, and sufficiency standing engaged for the same.

Thus Jesus, when first planted by the Father's hand as the first and only begotten, chosen and be-

[1] John xv, 5. [2] Ezek. xxxiv, 29. [3] Matt. xv, 13.

loved, was as the stock or set, whose branches doth not appear; but having then his seed in himself, he was to put them forth, as his branches in due season, according to the appointment and *foreknowledge* of the great husbandman; his wisdom, power, care, and all-sufficiency, standing engaged for the same.

As the stem and branches make one tree, so Jesus and the people make one body, one man, one Christ, one elect, one beloved of the Father, one crucified, raised, and everliving. The stock and branches making one tree, grow in one soil; so Christ and the people are jointly rooted and grounded in the Father's love; hence the saying of Christ, Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.[1] They are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.[2] Standing with him in the same relation to the Divine Majesty. Thus Jesus himself says, Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.[3] The root and branches making one tree, have but one and the same life, sap, and fruitfulness: so Christ and his people have both one and the same eternal life; God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.[4] Therefore the Saviour saith, Because I live, ye shall live also.[5] They have also the same fruit, for the fruit is not of the branches distinct from the stem, nor of the stem without the branches; but of the tree, consisting of

[1] John xvii, 23. [2] Rom. viii, 17. [3] John xx. 17.
[4] 1 John, v. 11. [5] John xiv, 19.

stem and branches. So also is Christ, who says, From me is thy fruit found.[1] In brief, if Jesus meant to teach us the union subsisting between Himself and his Church, under the similitude of a vine and its branches, which he certainly did; then, whatsoever can be said in the oneness of the tree, consisting of stock and branches, as a figure, can, with much more propriety, be said of Christ and the people united, as the thing signified.

The date of that union which the branches hath to the stem, is equal to their existence; yea, as considered in the stock, the union which made them one with it, was before they had any apparent existence. Though the vine-stock, in itself, may have the most fruitful qualities, yet it cannot exhibit the same, by bringing forth fruit to perfection, except it first put forth its proper branches; therefore the existence of the branches, their union to the stem, and their life in the same, is before, yea necessarily antecedent to all their productions of fruit. So also is Christ: our union to him bearing a prior date to our visible personal existence: therefore they are said to be chosen in him,[2] and to have grace which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began.[3] Although Jesus, as the root and stem, was possessed of qualities infinitely fruitful, yet there was neither possibility nor occasion of exhibiting this, by bringing forth his fruit, except his people, or proper branches,

[1] Hosea xiv, 8. [2] Eph. i, 4. [3] 2 Tim i, 9.

are first put forth. Accordingly they were put forth in Adam to a personal existence; and sin entering, his bringing forth fruit was possible, and an opportunity administered him of signalizing himself in so doing: for as the union of the branch to the stem is not lessened by sprouting into a visible existence, but is as full as when it was hidden in the stock; neither was the church or members of Christ, less united unto him when put forth in Adam, than when only existing in him, being still his true and proper branches; but, smitten with mildew and blasting in Adam's offence, their life, sap, and fruitfulness, was repelled and driven back to the root, until the great husbandman, in infinite wisdom, so manured and dressed the root, that, forcing the life and sap upwards, the branches were passive unto its influence, until all its fruit appeared.

In order to their fruitfulness, the branches were purged in the vine; there the *superfluities of the whole were cut off*, and all that was necessary for their perpetual fruitfulness accomplished. In like manner the church, included in Christ, were purged in him in order to their fruitfulness; in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ,[1] when he had by himself purged our sins,[2] being now justified by his blood,[3] and sanctified through the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.[4] Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify

[1] Col. ii, 11. [2] Heb i, 3. [3] Rom. v, 9. [4] Heb. x, 10.

the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.[1] The vine thus purged, brings forth its fruit, upon the native branches; having no other medium of bringing it forth. Thus Christ brought forth all the fruit of his pure conception, his spotless birth, his circumcision and holy life, his bloody, shameful, and terrible death, his glorious resurrection and ascension upon the people, as the branches: having taken on himself the seed of Abraham, he in them, and they in him, fulfilled all righteousness, obeyed the law, and endured the penalty for the past transgression, being thus made perfect in one. And because, through all this, the people were passive, and Christ the active, conscious, and quickening Spirit of the whole; therefore saith the prophet, Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.[2] From me is thy fruit found.[3]

Again, the apostle treats of this glorious subject of union, under the figure of the oneness and harmony of many members in one body; for as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.[4] The complete body here spoken of, is similar to Christ, and the members which fill up his body, to the people. Take away the members, and there will remain no body; take a few, yea one only, away, and the body is not perfect; deny the proportionable perfection of any one of these members,

[1] Heb. xiii, 12. [2] Isa. xxvi, 12. [3] Hos. xiv, 8. [4] 1 Cor. xii. 12.

and then the symmetry of the body is destroyed. So also is Christ; take away the people, or deny that they were united to their head, Jesus, at some certain time, then was there at that time no Christ. Or, if all the church were not united to him, but some particular member or members stood, at any time, unrelated unto him, then he was not a perfect Christ at that time; or, if it is possible that a bone of that body should be broken, or a member cut off, then may he yet be rendered an imperfect Christ; and, withal, a deficiency in his power will appear; because no man hateth his own flesh, but naturally cares for it, loves and cherisheth it. Again, if this church, as united to Christ, is not perfect according to the perfection of beauty in righteousness, holiness, wisdom, &c., then is Christ deficient in those particulars; which to affirm, will be agreed upon by all his worshippers to be blasphemy. From hence we may infer, that whatever Jesus was, whatever he did, suffered, or now is, under the character Christ; the people, as the fulness of him who filleth all in all, are to be considered with him and in him, in the same circumstances and condition, through every dispensation. Jesus is head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.[1] This leads us to the consideration of the human body as the intelligible figure of this sublime idea, our union with Christ. The head and members

[1] Eph. i, 22, 23.

are one in conception; this represents the people's oneness with Christ, as the object of the Father's love. Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.[1] As the head and members are born at once, so Christ and his Church were united in his birth, as pure and free from the original taint; and also in his glorious resurrection, as born from the dead. As the head and members in one body are nourished by the same food, so Christ and the church live by the same grace, good will, and eternal love of the Father. As the head and members in one body have but one life, so Christ and his Church have but one eternal life, one life unto God; our eternal life is in Christ;[2] because I live, ye shall live also.[3] This is the word of the Lord.

Again, from the harmony of the body, the head and members have but one condition; they mourn together, and rejoice together: so also is Christ. We were planted together, with him in the likeness of his death, and are also with him in the likeness of his resurrection. As the harmony of the body prevents all schism therein, so the head saith not unto the feet I have no need of you; neither is there any separate interest in Christ, nor will he say unto the people, I have no need of you; nor will the feet, though thus acknowledged, boast themselves against the head, usurp its dignity and say, I have no need of you; but will confess and reverence it as pre-eminent, as

[1] John xvii, 23. [2] 1 John v, 11. [3] John xiv, 19.

the seat of wisdom, by which the economy of the whole is preserved: so also is Christ, made of God unto us wisdom.[1] As the head is the source of light to the body, the wise man's eyes being in his head:[2] so also is Christ the light of the world.[3] The head is the seat of reason to the body, by which it is directed and influenced to shun all dangers, to refuse the evil and choose the good. It is the disorder of the head only that can deprive the body of this: if the head is free, the hurt of any other member cannot spoil the economy of the body: so also is Christ. He as the head, is our divine reason and influence. As for the people, the Lord saith of them, It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.[4] Christ, as our head, is above all distress, cannot be disordered; therefore the harmony and economy of his body cannot be spoiled, which makes us sing

Christ's our head, gone up on high.
  And we his body are;
All our fears before him fly,
  Our each distracting care.
Though we Satan's darts should feel,
  His power can never strike us dead;
He may bruise us on the heel,
  But cannot reach our head.

Again, the increase and nourishment of the body, is by union with the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered

[1] 1 Cor. i, 30. [2] Eccles. ii, 14. [3] John viii, 12. [4] Jer. x, 23.

and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.[1] The head first receives the food, relishes and prepares it for the whole body: so also is Christ. As the head, he first received the grace, it being given us in him before the world began: as the head, he tasted for us, not death only, which he tasted for every man, but life and immortality, which he entered into and relished in our name and nature, as the head for the body. He, as our head, prepared our food for us, which he did, by fulfilling the condition of life and enduring the penalty that we might inherit the promise. Our union to him making his condition ours, we are nourished by him. As the head, though the most exalted and comely part, is yet a member of the body, it hath a right to suffer for the other members, the chastisement of their peace; so also is Christ. When they smote the Judge of Israel upon the cheek with a rod, it was the iniquity of his heels which compassed him about; it was the chastisement of their peace which he bare, and their iniquities which were laid upon him. They having wandered into forbidden paths, had the punishment of their wanderings inflicted upon their head. It was the sacrilege, blood, and oppression of the hands, that was visited upon the head, when Jehovah's flaming sword awoke against the man who was his fellow. The union and harmony of the body, renders it equitable to punish and chastise the whole body in one

[1] Col. ii, 19.

member, for its offence in another; because if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.[1] As the union of the body makes it equitable to punish the head for the offence of the other members; with like equity do the members participate with the head in all its honours and glory. Thus the crowning of the head, crowns the whole man, and every member partakes of the honour.

The precious ointment poured on the head, runs down to the hem over the whole man, so that every member is anointed in the anointing of the head. By the laying on of hands upon the head only, the blessing was conferred on the whole man. Thus whether one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it;[2] so also is Christ. Is he crowned with glory and honour? behold he saith, in his appeal to the Father, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one."[3] Our head, Christ, first, as having the pre-eminence, is immediately united to the Father, and we by him. He is immediately the Son of God, and we have the adoption of children by him.[4] He is the immediate object of the Father's love; but we, by union with him, are beloved as he is beloved.[5] He is the first elect, immediately the chosen of God; but we, by union with him, were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.[6]

[1] 1 Cor xii, 26. [2] 1 Cor. xii, 26. [3] John xvii, 22.
[4] Eph. i, 4. [5] John xvii, 23. [6] Eph. i, 4.

Thus considering him as the head of his body, the church, we give him the pre-eminence, as immediately receiving all grace and glory from the Father; of which honour, all the members, as united to him, the head, must necessarily partake in him. Thus the union of head and members, mutually communicating their condition to each other, when rightly examined, throws a light upon the matter, and shews us how Jesus hath, from hence, the right of redemption. The justice of his blood-shedding appeared in this, namely, that the punishment of one member is virtually the punishment of the whole man; and if for the purpose of punishment, the whole body may be considered in any one member, it may with still greater propriety be considered in the more exalted, pre-eminent member, the head. Accordingly the Scriptures are very explicit on this point, and speak much of our being in Christ, chosen in him, justified in him, sanctified in him, saved in him, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, by virtue of this union, or being in him, as branches in the vine, as members in the body, &c.

His people are considered together with him, through all the circumstances of his birth, life, death, resurrection, and glory. The church was delivered of a man child; who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth

her children.[1] Christ was certainly the man-child here spoken of; compare what is there said, with Rev. xii, 5. And yet this man-child is here shewn to be the children of Zion, to be a nation born at once. Hence we conclude, that the union between Christ and the people is such, that they, as members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,[2] were in him in his birth, in the whole of his life, death, and resurrection. In him were they circumcised, and the body of the sins of their flesh put off by the circumcision of Christ.[3] In him fulfilling the law, and walking in all the commandments of God blameless. Crucified with him.[4] And that the resurrection of Christ was the resurrection of the people from death, as the wages of sin, the Holy Ghost testifies by the prophets: Thy dead shall live, with my dead body shall they arise.[5] And, after two days will he revive us, in the third day will he raise us, and we shall live in his sight.[6] Thus also the apostle: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ.[7] From hence it is evident, that the union between Christ and his people was such, (as head and members in one body,) that they were with him, and in him, in his birth, his life, his death, resurrection and glory; therefore his sufferings, wars, and triumphs, all are

[1] Isa. lxvi, 7, 8. [2] Eph v, 30. [3] Col. ii, 11. [4] Gal. ii, 20
[5] Isa. xxvi, 19. [6] Hos vi, 2. [7] Eph ii, 5, 6.

theirs, and they have a right, from this, to rejoice in him, in what he has done, in what he is, and in the acceptance he hath found with the Father; and this, notwithstanding all the weakness and vanity they perceive in themselves.

Again, the union of Christ and his Church is taught from the similitude of a building; of which Christ is both the foundation and top stone, as appears from the words of the prophet: "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone;[1] and, "The stone which the builders refused, the same is become the head of the corner."[2] As the whole building is locked in and inclosed between the foundation stone and the head stone so also is Christ. He is the Alpha and Omega. The building was begun and finished in him. He is the foundation of our election, grace, and sonship; we having all by union with him, and the whole is supported by him. So is he, as the author and finisher of our salvation, as made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He is the head of the corner, our first and last, our security in eternity and time; in whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.[3]

We consider Christ to have been appointed the Saviour of man in the eternal decree; then was the foundation laid, and in his incarnation, holy birth, and life of righteousness, we see the building rising;

[1] Isa. xxxviii, 16. [2] Luke xx, 17. [3] Eph. ii, 22.

until through his sufferings, death, resurrection, justification in the Spirit, and reception in glory, the building was finished, and the head-stone brought forth with shoutings, crying Grace, Grace unto it. The people, as chosen in Christ, had this grace given them, that Jew and Gentile should be builded together in him, until they were found a meet habitation of God through the Spirit. The foundation and corner-stone with the middle stones, make but one building; so Christ and the people, make one house, where God delights to dwell; one temple, the glory of which as the latter is greater than that of the former. Here God walks in the midst of the people, as he hath promised; because his dwelling in Christ, is his dwelling in them. To come up to the faith and understanding of this in the Spirit, is the substance of that shadow which we have in the tribes of Israel, at a certain age, going up from every quarter of the land, to the temple at Jerusalem to worship.

Again, the union of Christ and his Church is represented under the figure of a man and his wife. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh; this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his church.[1]

These words of the apostle are a quotation from Gen. ii, 23, where Adam, on the first sight of his Eve, declares the union subsisting between them. It is

[1] Eph. v, 31, 32.

evident from his words, that this relation did not consist in that matrimonial connection which commenced, when by mutual consent and covenant they cohabited and possessed each other; but was dependent on something prior to this. The source of their union and kindred relation, was their being one in the love of the Father, where they were undistinguished in sex, &c., there being neither male nor female in Christ Jesus, in whom they were loved and chosen before the world begun. And yet the man was not without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord. This source had its first opening in their concretion in one body, and human intelligence; which body and intelligence was male, though not exclusive of the female; but the latter, according to the distinction of sex and personal existence, was as being in the male in a passive state, and the male the active consciousness of the twain in one. Adam, considering his perfection in knowledge, could not be ignorant of this his true state; and, therefore, expecting the woman to be distinguished in person and sex, as a manifestation to his senses of the truth of her being and union unto him, he knew her when the Lord God brought her unto him. And though there was a deep sleep upon him, when she was built from his side, yet when he saw her, he said she was flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, alluding unto the former truth, and not unto anything which was to follow, for they were not made more one flesh by that

matrimonial embrace which followed than they were before; the latter, as a fruit or consequence, being only declarative of the original truth, always apparent to God, and in itself with him perfect and permanent.

Thus the matrimonial bond of union was, with them, a consequence and fruit of an antecedent union and kindred. This also is more manifest, where Abraham, when he was old, caused his servant to swear by the Lord God of heaven and earth, that he would not take a wife to his son of the daughters of the land, but that he would take him a wife of his kindred. Such also was Isaac's injunction to Jacob. In this particular, also, Esau offended, by marrying the daughters of Heth, when there was no union or kindred previous to the marriage. From all which, it appears that Adam's speech to Eve, was grounded upon that kindred union which subsisted between them before their marriage.

The apostle having said, that a man and his wife should be one flesh, immediately adds, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his church." From whence we may observe, that the union of Adam and Eve, of which I have already spoken, was truly a figure of Christ and his Church. And we learn, moreover, that this figure, though close and pertinent, is but a figure, an imperfect representation of the matter, which made the apostle turn from the fleshly marriage, and say, it is a great mystery; and pointing to the union of Christ and

the people, as the grand truth or thing signified, he adds, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. The union and kindred relation of Adam and Eve, and of the patriarchs and their wives, previous to their marriage (the latter being subsequent to the former, and a positive proof thereof) according to the primitive law is only a type or shadow; the earthly things being a pattern of the heavenly, and so representing the oneness of Christ and the church. Their marriage, as a figure, shews our believing or closing with Christ by faith; and that union and affinity which subsisted between them before marriage, was a shadow of the union between Christ and his Church, before the church is brought to the knowledge of her husband by believing, or ere they are married unto him who is risen from the dead. But as marriage is the consummate end of union, it is to be considered as explanatory of the blessings contained therein; it shews the woman under her husband's name, in joint possession and enjoyment with him of his state and condition. As one flesh, they cannot be insensible of each other's state, but must mutually feel pain, ease, hunger, thirst, joy, sorrow, happiness and unhappiness; they cannot possibly hate each other, because no man ever yet hated his own flesh. As one flesh they have but one interest, one aim, one end; they are not twain in any condition, but constantly one in all things.

If this idea of marriage be true, it may be easily

perceived that it is only true in Christ. Previous to our marriage by faith with him who is risen from the dead, there is a discovery made of his person, of his being our kinsman redeemer, of his right to demand us. Hence it appears wrong to refuse him; nor are we merely under the compulsion of that divine right which he hath to us; but he also shews us his glory, his personal beauties, his suitableness to our wants; and thus are our judgments convinced, our objections silenced, and the full consent of all our powers gained to be his. Thus we come to bear his name, to commit ourselves fully to him with all our concerns, until we become contented and rejoiced, that he should clothe us, feed us, instruct us, protect, nourish, guide, and preserve us unto everlasting life. The mind being filled with believing contemplations of Christ, thus revealing himself as pure, accepted of God, and lovely; discerning, withal, the right of appropriation, from union and relation unto him, joins itself in affinity unto him; yea, puts him on, wrapping itself in him; and thus standing in his state and condition it is purged from all guiltiness, and retaining no consciousness of evil, it is holily bold towards God, having the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;[1] hence it is said that the worshippers once purged, should have no more conscience of sins,[2] they being made perfect as pertaining to the conscience.[3] In short, the church,

[1] 1 Pet. iii, 21. [2] Heb. x, 2. [3] Heb ix, 9.

as married unto Christ, assumes his name, as appears from Jer. xxxiii, 16, where she is called the Lord our righteousness; and again,[1] I will write upon him my new name. These scripture testimonies teach us that she is a joint possessor with him, as the apostle bears witness; if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.[2] And that his state and condition is upon us, John testifies, when he says, Because as he is, so are we in this world.[3] The husband being one flesh with his bride, cannot be insensible of her state, but must have a fellow feeling with her, and that in the tenderest manner, in honour unto himself and love unto her, as it is evident from the Scriptures. On this important subject, the following testimonies of scripture are very express. We have not an high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities:[4] but one who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.[5] He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.[6] Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.[7] And that no man hateth his own flesh, when spoken of the marriage union, hath its truth and perfection in Christ; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.[8] Though a woman should cease to have compassion on the son of her

[1] Rev. iii, 12. [2] Rom. viii, 17. [3] 1 John iv, 17.
[4] Heb. iv, 15. [5] Heb. v, 2. [6] Zech. ii, 8.
[7] Matt. xxv. 40. [8] Heb. xiii, 5.

womb, yet will I not forget thee.[1] So have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee: for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.[2] Thus we learn, that the institution of marriage, consisting of love and union, as the first; the espousal or contract, as the second; the consummation, with all the attendant blessings to the bride, with glory and honour to the bridegroom, as the third; furnishes us with a striking representation of the union that subsists between Christ and the church. The first corresponds to that ancient kindred union subsisting between them, wherein he always loved her; the second is a figure of his being made flesh, whereby he betrothed us unto himself; and the third, of the knowledge and enjoyment we have of our lovely bridegroom by faith, when believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. When the mind is filled with the knowledge of the Saviour's excellencies, and realizes his glorious character, we in a measure partake of his blessedness, have fellowship with him in his whole state; then all the blessings of his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, are apprehended, claimed, and possessed by us, as our own proper inheritance. Thus might I go on to explain the nature of this union, the Scriptures being very full of it; but, as

[1] Isa. xlix, 15. [2] Isa. liv, 9, 10.

what I have already said may probably be as much to the purpose as any future hint, should I say much more, and intending at first setting out, to study brevity as much as possible, I shall leave what I have written on the nature of union, to the reader's consideration.

Union between Christ and the church, is a matter universally acknowledged, where that deference, which is justly due to the Scriptures, is paid, though it is a subject very rarely treated of; which silence, concerning it, implies, either a general ignorance of its nature, or that it is considered to be a matter neither conducive to the glory of God, nor the happiness of mankind, and therefore not necessary to be taught. But even where it is, in some measure, known amongst men, and the utility of the doctrine allowed, they are much divided about the period of its taking place, some saying that it is before our believing or faith in Christ; whilst others, with as much strenuousness, assert the contrary. If what I have already offered to the consideration of the public, shall be allowed to have any weight, it will appear, that our union with Christ is not only antecedent to our faith and believing, but also to all that he did and suffered for us men and for our salvation. The matter proposed in the gospel to be believed is true, and relates to the person of Christ and his benefits. That he was the Son of God, the Christ, the true Messiah, the I AM, is a matter proposed to be believed upon the

credit of the Divine testimony. Because this is a truth, therefore is it to be believed; and as it is a truth before believing, it is evident that it is not made a truth by believing, but is in itself a truth perfect and permanent, whether believed or not.*

So also with relation unto Christ's benefits; that the Father is well-pleased in his beloved Son, is a truth in itself, the nature of which cannot be altered by our yielding or withholding our assent to it. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.[1] This positive testimony of redemption, and the forgiveness of sins, is declared unto them who at the time believed it not; upon the credit of which truth, they are called upon to return unto their God. Cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.[2] This was a truth concerning those who knew it not, and was to be declared unto them as such, that they, believing it, might be comforted. That Christ hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification; is true,

* But although the fact be true in itself, it is of no practical importance to him who is the object of it, until he be brought to receive that testimony concerning it, which is contained in the written word. Thus it is said that believers are united to Christ by faith, in the same manner as they are said to be justified by faith, although in the covenant of God their union to him, and their justification in him had taken place before they believed the record concerning it.—EDIT.

[1] Isa. xliv, 22. [2] Isa. xl, 2.

and therefore recorded to be credited and rejoiced in. As the gospel is true before our believing it, so union with Christ is a fact which has taken place antecedent to our believing it, the latter being necessary to the truth of the former, as I have sufficiently shewn under the first proposition in this treatise; where the necessity of union with him, not only as previous unto our faith in him, but also unto his suffering for our sins, appears obvious. That God loved *mankind* before Jesus died for them, the Scriptures affirm, where they make the latter a fruit of the former: and if God loved them before, he certainly saw them in a sinless state; for it is contrary to the holiness of his nature to love the unclean; being of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. But in themselves, as related to the earthly Adam, they were unclean; therefore he must have beheld them in Christ, loved them in him, which, if true, then were they in him; and, as being in him in this sense doth not suppose their knowledge of his person, through the belief of the gospel, but a passivity with respect to them, as branches hidden in the stock, or the woman in the man, it implies the closest union and the necessity thereof, before their believing, to render and preserve them objects worthy of the Divine love and favour.

Jesus, in his appeal unto the Father, says, Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me; and again, Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. In those words the love of the Father unto the Son,

is represented as the grand archetype of his love unto his people. The Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world; but, saith the Son, Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. The Father loved the Son as the brightness of his glory, and his own express image; but, saith the Son, Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. The Father loved the Son and preferred him before angels, having not said unto any of them, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; but, saith the Son, of the children of men, Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. The Father loves the Son with everlasting, unchangeable delight and pleasure; but, saith the Son, Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. The Father loveth the Son and hath revealed it unto him, yea hath given him the knowledge of it above measure; but, saith the Son, That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. From all which it appears that Christ and the church are one object of the Father's love, of his choice, good-will, delight, and pleasure; HE the head, and they the body, constituting the elect precious, the man beloved of God and accepted.

But the head being the medium between God and the body, hath the pre-eminence in all things: and as the head was never without the body, nor the body without the head in the Lord, the body hath always been, by union with the head, entitled unto all the

blessings, honours, and glories thereof. Nor doth the head withhold from the body that glory and honour which he immediately receives from God, but divinely sheds it over the whole man, according unto that washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; therefore, saith the head, The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one. But to be brief, what hath already been urged to prove the necessity of union, proves it to be also before faith, it being necessary unto the Father's loving us as he loved his Son; yea, unto his choice of us in his Son; necessary unto the engagements of Christ on man's behalf, otherwise he had not the right of redemption; necessary unto his suffering the death of the cross for us, as hath been largely shewn in the former part of this work; it is also necessary unto our believing a truth, except it appear that our faith, or believing, makes it a truth. Indeed the apostle says, Through faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God; but he doth not say that faith made the worlds; so, truly, through faith we understand our union with Christ, yet it is not in this sense our faith that makes it.

But if it is not true until our believing, and by means thereof, then doth believing make that a truth which was not a truth, and faith creates its own object, and then embraces it. This looks like the

heathen idolatry, first making their gods, and then trusting in them; or like Milton's adventurous flight of Satan through chaos unto the new world, which he performed before the bridge was made.

That this is contrary to the Scriptures, is evident from the declaration: He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son; and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.[1] The truth here proposed to be believed, is this, that God hath given to us eternal life in his Son; and that this is a truth before it is believed, is evident; otherwise it doth not appear how our unbelief makes God a liar. Besides, to deny this truth, is to depreciate the sacrifice of Jesus, and to make it an insufficient atonement for sin, without faith and compliance on our part; thereby making the glory of Christ, and the truth of the promises made unto him, wholly dependent on the will and actions of the creature. And how fully this frustrates the grace of God, I leave unto every man who knows himself to determine.

Moreover, I take it, that where the all-sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus to put away sin, and that without any act of ours, either mental or external, is denied, it amounts to what the Scriptures call a crucifying of the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame: but to acknowledge the all-sufficiency

[1] 1 John v, 10, 11.

of the sacrifice of Christ to put away sin without any act of ours, and yet to deny this to be a truth until believed, viz., that he hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is a palpable contradiction, a position founded in prejudice without the least shadow of reason. Otherwise we are to consider such a confession as containing an equivocation: and when they confess the sacrifice of Christ as having put away sin, they make it synonymous with the sorrow, hatred, fear, faith, love, joy, &c., which they feel in their own bosoms, thereby making no account of the person and personal sufferings of Christ, they embrace a phantasm. The gospel is plain, simple, and inartificial, suited to the meanest capacity, and would be more universally acknowledged, were it not for that unreasonable estimate which men set on themselves, on account of their learning, wisdom, experience, &c. Thence judging themselves qualified to direct the consciences of their fellow-creatures, they will not suffer them to think for themselves, nor commend them to Jesus and the word of his grace; they always amuse them with an artificial religion, consisting of directions how to attain to faith, to sanctification, &c., and yet admit that they can do nothing, but that the agency of the Spirit is free as the wind; withal giving such definitions of saving faith, true holiness, &c., as none but schoolmen can understand; thereby puzzling the minds of people, puffing up the vain and opinionated with pride and arrogance, from a supposition of their

being possessed of those excellencies, and distracting the minds of the more phlegmatic and melancholy, through the fear of their not being possessed of them. But should mankind be released from those chains, and suffered to think for themselves, how natural would it be for them to conclude, when God proposes a matter in his word to be believed, that that matter is true before they have believed it. Therefore if it is true that Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, and that before our faith; that which was necessary unto this transaction, namely our union with him, is true also before faith. If it is not our faith, or believing, that makes this union, it is an act of eternal love, the purpose and grace which was given us in Jesus Christ before the world began; the antiquity of which is obvious. Nor may its date be fixed, because exceeding the limits of time; and what hath been from everlasting, will be unto everlasting; the eternal sameness of the person of Jesus being an undeniable proof of the unchangeableness of this union.

I shall now consider the objections generally made to the doctrine of union and endeavour to give them satisfactory answers.

The old trite objection of its tending unto licentiousness, leads the way, saying, if union with Christ is the ground of our acceptance with God and our security in his favour; then the doctrine of rewards and punishments is overthrown,

and man hath nothing left to stimulate him to virtue.

Answ. To work from an expectation of being rewarded, is to make it of debt and not of grace: but the nature of the Deity is so infinitely pure; so holy, just, and true his laws, that it is impossible man should make him his debtor; nay, it would be the highest arrogance to pretend it. The Scriptures are against it, when they protest that no flesh shall glory in his presence: common experience, in its sober moments, is against it, for that teaches us that every man living is infinitely short of conformity unto the Divine will; therefore the notion of obedience, from expectation of reward, is a tacit acknowledgment of man's utter ignorance, both of himself and his God. And then to suppose that the fear of punishment is necessary to excite men to obedience, is to reverse the Scriptures. The gospel is preached for the obedience of faith, that being thereby delivered from fear, we might serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

But the obedience of fear is diametrically opposite unto the obedience of faith; the former hath its rise and maintenance from a lie, from that habit and principle which makes God a liar, by not believing the record which he hath given of his Son; but the latter springs from a belief of the truth, from a full persuasion of the love of God, and of his being reconciled in Christ Jesus. The former is a doing evil that good may

come; for when the fear of punishment is judged necessary to obedience, unbelief is established, and authority given to crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame, to trample his blood under foot, and count it an unholy thing; for all this is tacitly taught in the fear of punishment, as necessary unto obedience; and yet this manifest antichristian policy is generally taught by those who seek themselves and not Christ Jesus the Lord. They very well know that ignorance, unbelief, and fear, are the nerves of implicit obedience unto their doctrines and traditions. That such an obedience is far from being a compensation for the despite done thereby to the Spirit of grace, and dishonour to the crucified One, they shall sooner or later know, when all their works shall be burnt up, and they shall suffer loss. But the obedience of faith is genuine, free from artifice, without fear, dependent on the perfect amity of God; yea, consists in a constant persuasion of, and rejoicing in this truth, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died upon a cross, and rose again from the dead, having thereby justified us from every charge once brought against us, and sanctified us from all our pollutions. To submit unto this, to have the conscience purified through the view and belief of this, yea, to have every thought brought into captivity unto this, is the true obedience of faith, and this so far from being urged by fear that fear would annihilate it; and so far from having an eye to the reward, that it

answers unto that charity which seeketh not its own, but says, when saw we thee hungry and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink, &c.? Therefore, that the doctrine of union with Christ, and salvation in him, overthroweth the doctrine of rewards and punishments, as that which influenceth our lives, is true; but then it only overturns that which the Scriptures explode, and what reason confesseth mean and selfish, and not that generous disinterested service of love, which it declares worthy of the Divine Being, and becoming the dignity of man.

Objec. But doth not the Scriptures rather establish the doctrine of rewards and punishments, as that which excites to choose the good and refuse the evil? Is not this their express language; say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings; woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him;[1] with many other texts of like import?

Answ. Unto the right understanding of the Scriptures, it is necessary to know that they consist of two parts, letter and spirit, or law and gospel. Now, the letter (or the law) killeth, saith the apostle, but the spirit (or the gospel) giveth life. And as this is needful to be known, so is it also that we should be able to distinguish one from the other; else how doth it appear that we rightly divide the word of life? If the gospel be considered as God's good sayings, or

[1] Isa. iii, 10, 11.

and thus standing in him, we can indeed read the law or the doctrine of rewards and punishments without fear, because the punishments, yea, all the threatenings in the book of God, have been executed upon us, as sinners and law-breakers in him. Hence it is we dare not read the demands of the law unto ourselves as distinct or separate from our union and oneness with him, because we cannot answer them, it being only designed as a ministration of death, to slay us to ourselves, and make us dependent on him. Nor dare we read any one threatening in Scriptures against the sinner and ungodly, unto ourselves, out of him, because we cannot endure it To imagine from any worthiness in ourselves, that we come not under those characters against which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, and which are so dreadfully threatened in the word, is to be most wretchedly ignorant of the spirituality of God's law, and, consequently, of the condition of human nature; for where the holiness of the law is known, it will appear that there is not one obnoxious character in the Scriptures, which, according to the purity of the law, doth not belong to all mankind; nor can the most upright amongst men, in justice, deny its belonging to them; therefore our exemption from such characters, and from the punishment due to them, is only by union with Christ, where his character is upon us before the Father; and according to the consciousness we have of our salvation standing here, are free

from the fear of future punishment, having seen the end of it in Christ Jesus, and therefore are no longer to be influenced thereby. As to the promised reward, the promises were made to Abraham and his seed; which seed, according to the apostle, is Christ. It is also to be observed, that, previous unto inheriting the promise, there must be a fulfilling the law, to make it appear that the promises of God are not against the law. Where the promises, in general, speak unto man, it is unto him as willing, obedient, repentant, fearing the Lord, believing, &c., every which characteristic amounts unto what the law demands of man, viz. satisfaction for dishonour received, by sin that is past, and perfect obedience unto its precepts for the future. Although those requisites are not expressly mentioned in every promise, they are, nevertheless, implied, otherwise the promises of God would be against the law, which God forbid. Now, if the promise only rewards the man whom the law approves, as holy, just, and true, it is easy to perceive that Jesus only is the man; For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen.[1] Therefore the rewards are his; he as the head is crowned with glory, honour, and immortality; whilst every member, by union with the head, partakes of his honours. Whereas, to expect reward for the work of our own hands, would be to set up for ourselves, to act independent of our head, and to

[1] 2 Cor. i. 20.

refuse him the pre-eminence in all things. But when we give him this, we are neither influenced by the fear of punishment, nor hope of reward, but by our head, Christ alone; our hearts are in his hand, and committing ourselves with all our concerns, unto him, we permit him to guide us, and are passive with him. And certain it is, the more we are delivered from that religion which consists in self-seeking, the less injurious we are in this present world.

Objec. Doth not your description of the person unto whom the promises belong, make salvation conditional, by asserting that the promise rewards none but such whom the law approves of? This contradicts the apostle's doctrine, By grace ye are saved.

Answ. That God is sovereign I grant; but that he saves mankind from mere sovereignty or arbitrary grace, without having respect unto this law, as a transcript of his own perfections, I think I ought to deny; because he hath pledged his faithfulness and truth unto his law, that the transgressor should be punished, and that it should be established, rather than made void, by the faith of the gospel. Whereas the law would be against such promises, as have no respect unto its justice, and purity. But the Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness' sake, he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.[1] Again, grace without truth, or salvation without respecting the purity and justice of the law, would

[1] Isa. xlii, 21.

be to pour contempt upon the death and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, as not necessary unto salvation, and to make it either merely accidental, from the rage of his enemies, or at farthest, exemplary only; which supposition would overturn and invalidate the testimony of the Scriptures concerning his fulfilling all righteousness, enduring the curse of the law, and washing us from our sins in his blood. Again, to suppose that mankind are saved by any new law, consisting of repentance, faith, and new obedience, substituting sincerity, in the stead of perfection; I say, to suppose this, would be to make God changeable; first, giving a law as a rule of righteousness, and a standard, whereby to know good and evil; and, in process of time, giving another upon easier terms; which could not be without a change in his perfections; his nature and perfections being the original of every law given by him to mankind.

But I would not multiply words to confute, what hath not the least shadow of reason, or foundation in the Scriptures; for Jesus says, Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil: for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot, or one tittle shall in no wise pass, till all be fulfilled.[1] It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.[2] It is evident that our Saviour means by this law, that which was given upon Sinai;

[1] Matt. v, 17, 18. [2] Luke xvi, 17.

nor, did he give any new commandment which was not included in that law, as appears from his testimony elsewhere. But, when we assert that the promises are only fulfilled on such whom the law approves of, and that Jesus only was the man thus approved of God, I consider him in the capacity of the second Adam, including the people in himself; who by union with him, inherit the blessing. And though they can, upon this consideration, claim the forgiveness of sin, as an act of justice in God, yet are they saved by grace: their election in Christ, their union with him, their eternal life, with all the blessings thereof, was God's purpose and grace, given them in Christ Jesus, before the world began, according to which grace they are saved. Again, as it was grace that founded, so was it grace that executed this plan of salvation, we being passive in the hands of grace, when he washed us from our sins in his own blood, when he created us anew, and presented us unto himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; we, as in him, being in passivity, inactive, and incapable of merit, makes that to be mere grace unto us as individuals, which unto him, as including mankind, was conditional.

Objec. The doctrine of union with Christ, before faith, and of salvation in him, tends to make faith, or believing, void; because if I am united to Christ, justified, forgiven, and accepted in him before I believe, where is the necessity of believing at all?

Answ. To build without a foundation, is to labour in vain. How shall they believe except they hear? saith the apostle; and what shall they hear, if the truth to be believed hath no existence until it be believed? But having spoken unto this under the article of union before faith, I wave it here.

I would only ask, is it from the belief of our union with Christ, and salvation in him, or from the disbelief thereof, that occasion is taken to live in unbelief, and believing counted unnecessary? Not from the latter, according to the objection, because to disbelieve a falsehood, is negative orthodoxy; and to say it is from the former, is the most palpable contradiction, because whosoever believeth that, believeth what the gospel proposes to be believed, therefore the objection, of course, falls to the ground.

Every man proposing a system unto his fellow-creatures, doth it with a view that they should believe it, be it true or false: so also when union with Christ, and salvation in him, before they apprehend him, is taught the people, is it not with a view that they should believe it, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory? It certainly is, and therefore is not designed to keep them in unbelief. Again, it is the word of God whereby faith comes; the declaration, even unto unbelievers, of their warfare accomplished, and their iniquities pardoned, as well attested in the Scriptures, hath certainly a more genuine tendency to produce faith and confidence in

God, than to tell them if they will believe, &c. they shall be justified, their sins be expiated and forgiven. However smoothly and artfully this may be worded, it is impossible to free it from the idea of condition, and, what is yet worse, such a condition as man hath neither wisdom, will, nor power to fulfil; yea, it is still, in effect, to preach the law. Believe and thou shalt be saved, is certainly similar unto, do this and live; man, in himself, being as capable of doing one as the other.

When mankind are taught, that their eternal salvation depends upon believing, (and what is yet more strange, believing a matter which is not true until believed) it is natural for every man, whose conscience is alarmed, to attempt it; but the more he endeavours, the farther he is off; like rowing against a violent stream: the dread of coming short, through unbelief, and his weakness and utter incapacity, to believe, rushes upon him like a torrent, bears him back with violence, until discouraged and enervated he sinks, overwhelmed with fear and bondage. Indeed, where believing is only respected as a bare assent unto a proposition, mankind may, with some shadow of reason, talk of their abilities, and of the easiness of the condition, pretending that it is an instance of the richest, freest grace, where salvation is promised upon believing. But it is not practicable with a mind that is in earnest, to assent unto a human proposition without demonstration, much less respecting divine

things, because the difficulty in believing, increases in proportion to the magnitude and concernment of the matter believed; which difficulty is owing unto the propensity of human nature to an evil heart of unbelief, unto the remoteness of heavenly things from our natural ideas, and their contrariety unto our senses. Believe and thou shalt be saved, like any other law precept, when enforced upon the mind of man, generating with his weakness, begets unbelief and fear, but never produceth faith: that comes only by the word of life, that word which bringeth salvation, which preaches peace by Jesus Christ, declaring him as made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that whosoever glorieth, should glory in the Lord. The belief of the truth cometh by hearing of its perfection, reality, and immutability; of our being delivered from the curse, in him who was made a curse for us; of our being saved in him, with an everlasting salvation; of his being such an high-priest as becometh us; in brief, of our oneness with him, and indisputable right from thence, to consider ourselves according unto him, as our head and husband. Thus, whilst men are not put upon believing in order to save themselves, but are taught calmly to hear the word that bringeth salvation, they, according to the power of the Holy Ghost, either instantaneously, or gradually, credit the report, and consequently enter into the belief of the truth, without their once attempting to believe, or

troubling or perplexing themselves about it. Whilst such who are more concerned about their mode of believing, than about the truth which is to be believed, are distressed under the difficulty, yea the impossibility of their performing it, when they have exerted themselves to the utmost; therefore as the doctrine of union with Christ, before faith, and salvation in him, appears in this light, viz., the word by which faith cometh; nothing is more notorious than the unreasonableness of the objection, that it makes void faith.

Objec. But doth not such a union with Christ destroy his pre-eminence, tending to exalt man, to the degrading of Christ?

Answ. By no means: it rather establisheth his pre-eminence, where the people, as the members, by union with him, the head, are chosen, beloved, called, saved, and accepted of God. They receive no honour, grace, or blessing, but by him; being apprized of this, he is all their hope and salvation. They look unto the Father by him, nor dare they, at any time, approach God, but in him. He hath done all, suffered all, and obtained all. But the glory which he hath received, he freely gives unto them, whilst they confess him their head and Saviour; and as such they honour him, and eternally give him praise. Christ, in his office capacity, answers unto the idea of the human body, which being one is composed of many members, of which he himself is a member, *viz.*, the

head, the pre-eminent, and most highly exalted; upon whom all the members are dependent for honour, the head only wearing the crown; for unction, the head only was anointed; for all blessings, the head only receives them immediately from God, being always the medium between him and the body, and appointed to guide, influence, and nourish it. Every member brings its tribute unto the head, and with praise, confesseth his pre-eminence; whilst the head is not ashamed to call them brethren. The more highly they perceive themselves exalted, the more glorious and eminent the head appears before them: forasmuch as through all exaltations, in time and eternity, a just and proportionable distinction is kept up and maintained between the head and members, in dignity, beauty, and glory; and this all the members know, when influenced by their head; therefore the doctrine of union with Christ doth not destroy his pre-eminence, nor exalt mankind unto this dishonour.

Objec. But doth not the doctrine of union, which supposes Christ to suffer under the character of the sinner, contradict the apostle, who saith, Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust.[1]

Answ. To intimate that Jesus was a sinner in thought, word, or deed, is what I never intended, but would abhor the thought as highly blasphemous; nay, the prince of this world, when he came, having

[1] Pet. iii, 18.

nothing in him, was therefore constrained to appear in visible form and tempt him by his outward senses. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens; this was his proper, personal, individual character, and in this sense the apostle is to be understood speaking, when he saith, the just died for the unjust. But then we are told by another apostle, that he (viz. God) hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin,[1] from which it appears, that he, who in his individual character was sinless, was yet, notwithstanding, as the head and representative of the church, made sin, yea made a curse for us; and under that character, was punished with that death and condemnation, which was due to man's offence. And this accounting of him a sinner, in the eye of justice, as it was equitable; so was it not from any personal guile, for he knew no sin; but from his union unto the sinful people, which rendered the punishment of their sin upon him, an act of divine and strict justice. Thus it appears that the doctrine of union, which represents Jesus suffering under the character of the sinner, doth not suppose him such in his own particular person; nay, strongly, witnesseth the contrary, and respects him only thus by such an imputation as, considered on the article of union, is just and true with God and man.

Objec. This doctrine of union, as it speaks of our being one with Christ, in all he did and suffered,

[1] 2 Cor. v, 21.

seems contrary unto his testimony by the prophet; where he says, I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me.[1]

Answ. It is evident from the words, that his meaning is, he received no help or assistance from the people. This the fifth verse sheweth: I looked and there was none to help, &c., therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me. The doctrine of union contains no such proposition as this, that the people were fellow-helpers with Christ, when he atoned for sin, and destroyed the enemies of their salvation: in this sense they were not with him: in this sense we were not with Adam when he sinned; we were not abetting, concurring, and active in his offence; and yet we were in him offending in the great transgression.

We were also with Christ, and in him, through all he did and suffered; though not active, not aiding or assisting in his obedience, nor enduring any part of his torments, according to our sensation. In this sense, he trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him. And where the Scriptures speak of our being in him, of being crucified with him, raised with him, sitting together in heavenly places in him, &c., as they evidently speak of these things according to union; so when compared with our Saviour's saying by the prophet before-mentioned, it appears that we were in him, and with him, through all, but not active; we were altogether in a

[1] Isa. lxiii, 3.

passive state, whilst the toil and torment was wholly his. Yet through all, he was greatly conscious of his including the people in himself, his life and death, being that of the whole body; for if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Thus, though we were not with him, as helping or assisting him, according to the prophet, yet were we always in him, and with him according to the doctrine of union so abundantly taught in the Scriptures. The objections already mentioned, and which I have answered, being those which chiefly arise in the minds of serious unprejudiced persons against the doctrine of union; I shall not consider any more at present, as I do not intend anything controversial, in the present treatise.

I shall proceed to consider, as proposed at first, a few of the never-failing springs of consolation which arise from the grace of union with Christ.

That the harmony of the Divine perfections, as manifestly established by the doctrine of union, is a consolatory consideration, every man, apprehending it, can abundantly testify. We can have no confidence towards God, whilst we imagine that his attributes are contrary to us; and I am persuaded that this imagination is very natural unto all such who have seen human nature in its ruins; and, striving with all wisdom, power, and diligence, to repair its breaches, have found that their utmost efforts have been like untempered mortar, which still falls off and makes the breach worse; or like a piece

of new cloth put upon an old garment, still enlarging the rent. Where persons have been thus exercised, though they might at times have a faint hope in the mercy of God, they have thought it inconsistent with his justice and purity to save them from the wrath to come. But when the grace of union with Christ is manifest unto them, they can see all things consist by him: Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

Mankind may now rejoice in the justice and purity of God; yea, appeal unto him as just, as holy, as faithful, because, according unto union with Christ, justice hath been satisfied in his bloodshedding and death; where they in him, and he in them, have been fully punished for all their iniquity; upon which the Lord saith, Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.[1] Hence he is just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness; yea, according unto his holiness, may they now have confidence in him: though his eyes are purer than to behold iniquity, they may approach him and stand before him with boldness, being by union with Christ, sanctified in him, holy in him, yea he himself is their holiness. When this is discerned we are no longer terrified at the holiness of the Divine nature, but have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; yea, have unspeakable delight in the holiness of God, and infinite expectations from it. As the promise is to

[1] Heb. x, 17.

such who confess and forsake their sin, it is fulfilled upon us in Jesus; all the promises of God being in him, yea, and in him, Amen. There have we, with all the prayers and supplications, strong crying, and tears, which Jesus offered in the days of his flesh, confessed our sins unto God; and where he, having purged our sin, appeared the second time without sin unto salvation, we have eternally forsaken them; therefore we appeal unto the faithfulness of him who hath promised. In this blessed union, this infinite love and grace of God our Father, unto us in Christ Jesus, we see the harmony of his nature in all his dealings with us, and can sing, with untold delight, Thou art glorious for ever, our Father, our God; thou art love, thou art mercy, thou art righteousness, thou art justice, thou art holiness, thou art faithfulness, thou art truth; holy and reverend is thy name, O Lord God of Hosts! and yet all thy glorious perfections agree in one, to accept us, delight in us, rejoice over us, and bless us with eternal life, and all its happiness, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Again, in this gracious union, the Scriptures are all fulfilled; and the Key of David given us, that we may open, what no man can shut, and shut, what no man can open. When men who are strangers unto this union, take it upon them to expound the Scriptures, it is amazing to see, with what contradictions and inconsistencies it abounds. The precept, the threatening, the promise, and gracious declaration, are

all jumbled together; often overthrowing by one, what they have set up by the other. But in Christ they all agree in one: in him the precept is fulfilled, the threatening endured, the promised reward received, and the free and eternal salvation of God continually embracing the children of men: therefore, standing in the grace of union with Christ, we are at peace with all the Scriptures. He in us, and we in him have fulfilled all righteousness, fully kept the commandments of God, and suffered the punishment due unto our sin, and now inherit the promise; whilst the voice of words, yea, every terrifying sound is silenced, and nothing now heard but the sound of grace, love, and goodwill.

When we read the Scriptures in Christ, we determine according to the possibility of things with God; unto him who believeth, all things are possible. The impossibilities and jarrings with which the letter abounds, such as the demands of perfect obedience; of satisfaction for sin; of salvation by grace, by works; of the forgiveness of sin by Christ; and yet judged according to the deeds done in the body, and giving an account, at that day, for every idle word, &c., all this, I say, hath its harmony and perfection in Jesus: nor have all the masters in Israel, for these eighteen hundred years, though there have been those who attempt it, been able to point out a reconciliation, and harmony of Scripture, out of him. But in him, as the representative of man, as

having the people in himself and he in them, the preceptive part is fulfilled perfectly, and all the threatenings executed upon the sinner, in him; in him saved by grace; in him justified by works; accepted in him; having redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sin. Our account for the idle word is, that in ourselves we are carnal, sold under sin and have no good thing; but that in Christ we are filled, in him sanctified, in him accepted; and therefore appeal from the first Adam unto the second. In like manner we account for the deeds done in the body; Jesus having atoned for the evil, and done the good. These, and all other parts of scripture, which may appear in a critical and contradictory light, unto a person who hath not yet apprehended the union; are, nevertheless, consistent, harmonious, and gracious unto all such who know what it is to be one with Christ, and Christ with them. In this light we can read the Scriptures with pleasure, in seeing all fulfilled in him, every dark saying opening up in him, and he gloriously triumphant, filling all in all. We also read them profitably, forasmuch as speaking thus of Christ, they hush and banish the fears arising from nature or temptation: they fortify the mind against the face of the enemy; cherish and support us under all the vicissitudes of life; and when depressed beneath the sense of human nature in its ruins, they present us with a glorious prospect of immortality, in the perfect resemblance and likeness of Jesus; and,

to warm and refresh the mind more effectually, they bring the prospect near, and show us now the workmanship of God created anew in Christ Jesus, now passed from death unto life; it is done, saith Jesus, I am Alpha, and Omega.

Again, from the grace and truth of union, the Christian hath a right to reckon of himself, and of his own state and condition towards God, according to the state and condition in which Christ is; hence, saith the apostle, reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.[1] And O what grace is this! that we helpless worms, whose every word, work, and thought, are unholy; yea, in whom, according to the strongest testimony of our senses and reason, there are yet found the motions, life, and love of sin, should have a right to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, dead unto what we yet feel the life of; dead unto what we yet feel the love of; dead unto what is yet stronger than we, and against which our utmost efforts, when compared with its strength, are feebleness itself; it esteems all our iron as straw, and our brass as rotten wood; and, yet to reckon ourselves dead unto this; what an amazing reckoning it is! yea, not only dead unto sin, whereby we are exempted from its filth, guilt, and condemnation; but we are to reckon ourselves positively holy, righteous, and fruitful, alive unto God, and that in opposition to all we see, feel, or

[1] Rom. vi, 11.

understand of ourselves, according to sense. What are we then to reckon of ourselves by? by Jesus Christ our Lord! Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath raised up a horn of salvation in the house of his servant David, according to the mouth of all his prophets which have been since the world began, which union with Christ is our right of appropriation; otherwise we appropriate him and his benefits improperly, yea, unjustly; but in this light we can say, Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.[1] Hence, we have authority to conclude, if he is righteous, we are righteous; as he, we are holy; as he, we are wise; as he, we have obtained redemption, and are accepted with him. This doth not suppose any excellency or worthiness in ourselves, whereby we are distinguished from our fellow-creatures, or set above our neighbours; for then we should glory in the flesh, and should become an adulterous generation; which glorying is not good, but deeply odious unto all who are espoused, as chaste virgins, unto Christ; insomuch that they can say, as hinted by the prophet, shameful spewing shall be on their glory.[2] But Jesus is our all, and our perfections are in him; that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.[3] Against hope, believing in hope, in Christ will we glory; against all the hopeless,

[1] 1 John iv, 17. [2] Hab. ii, 16. [3] 1 Cor. i, 31.

depressing views we have of ourselves, when comparing ourselves with ourselves, we would always believe in hope; in hope of his being accepted; of God's being well pleased in him, and of our being accepted, and well-pleasing as him, by the grace of union with him, we look to things eternal and unseen, and not unto things present, which are seen. Our right and privilege is to judge of ourselves, and our state towards God, by union with Christ; by the Father's choice of him, his choice of us; by his love to him, his love unto us; by his acceptance of him, his acceptance of us; by his eternal life and glory, our eternal life and glory; and all this, without once considering the work of our own hands, or the desires, yearnings, or meditations of our hearts; but passing from ourselves unto Jesus, we are wholly found in him, not having our own righteousness, &c. Unto all who know themselves, this is certainly a life-giving word; a word that bringeth salvation; nor can anything but that self-righteous principle, which is abhorred and detested of God, withstand it; and that letteth and will let, until it be taken away, which the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming. But, unto all the Gentiles, the outcasts, the destitute, the sinners amongst mankind, with all who know themselves, and groan beneath the miseries of man; here are tidings of great joy! there is a Saviour born unto you who is Christ the Lord; and what is more, though

you are worthless, he is worthy; though you are lost, he is found; though you are unrighteous, unholy, unwise, yet he is righteous, holy, wise; and withal so nearly related, so closely united unto you that you may reckon yourselves to be what he is, and viewing him as yourselves through all he did and suffered, have your conscience purged from dead works; stand washed and acquitted in his bloody death, and have the answer of a good conscience towards God, by his resurrection.

Moreover, in the grace of union, the foundations are raised, and a glorious truth presented unto our view; which, as it is perfect and permanent before our believing, so is it, if, at any time we should be overtaken with unbelief and doubtfulness. This is that which, at first, authorizes, excites, and encourages us to credit the gospel report. This is that which strengthens in us what is often ready to die. This is that which raises us when fallen, which brings us back when we have wandered, and affords strong consolation unto all who have fled unto Jesus for refuge: hence, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, &c. Whilst he wears the character of righteous, we shall be accepted of God, and glorious in his sight; and that is everlastingly; for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The gospel is here a relation of facts, of who Jesus is, what he hath done, and that he hath loved us, hath saved us, hath washed,

forgiven, and accepted us; the Divine beauty and reasonableness of which appears in the grace of union. This grace doth not require us, sophistically and unnaturally, to make that a truth by believing, which was not a truth before; but first proposes Jesus as the truth, the grand original truth, before all things, and by whom all things consist: the ocean whence the rivers of grace and providence first had their rise; and whither, after having run through the intricacies of time, they tend again, discharging and emptying themselves of all their floods, into the bosom of that mighty deep whence they first received them; that he might be the kingdom, power, and glory. That his is the truth of all the types, predictions, and prophecies of the Jews; the truth of wisdom, righteousness, holiness, redemption, and salvation unto the Gentiles, is what the gospel declares; affirming, illustrating, arguing, persuading, until the arm of the Lord is revealed, and the report believed. Thus faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; hence, I would cry unto the ends of the earth, your warfare is accomplished, your iniquity is pardoned! you, who are lovers of pleasure, pursuing the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, as the highest, chiefest good; wherefore will you spend your money for that which is nought, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? wherefore will you thirst after vanity, and attempt filling your belly with the east wind? the Lord your God hath given you a

land flowing with milk and honey, beauty, honours, riches, length of days, wisdom, strength, perfection of righteousness, holiness, and liberty unlimited, all divine, all eternal, all heavenly glorious, are yours in Jesus; whose riches are unsearchable. Hence he calls all the ends of the earth to look unto him. Let those glorious prospects of grace and salvation, the bounty and benevolence of God to men, render the fashion of this world old and unseemly in your eyes, until it pass away, and you be found looking at the king in his glory, and the land which once was very far off, but is now brought nigh by the blood of Jesus; this when seen, shall sicken your ear to every sound, your eye to every object, and your heart to every enjoyment, wherein the voice of Jesus' blood, the beauty of his person, the riches, and greatness of his salvation, are not made manifest; and shall learn you to separate between the precious and the vile.

Your God and Father is not disappointed in you; you have not deceived him; he never expected any thing from you, more or less, than what he hath found. The satisfaction which he had in you at first, was beholding you as the travail of his soul, and as such, he beholds you still. Your unbelief cannot make his grace of none effect; and though you have denied him, yet he cannot deny himself. That which was a truth before you believed, at the first, *viz.* Christ being your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, is a truth now, even when you

have ceased to believe; insomuch, that in every time of need, though you have sadly departed from him, you have the same foundation, authority, and encouragement to believe, and be assured, as you had at the first. It is the scripture testimony of Jesus, what he is, and what he hath done and suffered, that is the ground of our confidence; and not the reflection that we repent, believe, or obey; and it is most certain that this ground remaineth, that this foundation is unshaken; for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and that our unbelief or any change passing over us, as in ourselves, cannot alter him who is unchangeable, and always righteous and accepted. In him we are always as he is, according to which similitude, God always beholds us, and accepts us; therefore our change of frame or disposition, cannot change his views of us; for, as he only beholds us in Jesus, he can always say that he beholds no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel; the Lord his God is always with him, and the shout of a king is among them. O glorious grace! O triumphant love! Let him who is fallen, from hence, say, Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, for though I fall, I shall yet arise! Doth not this testimony quicken unto faith and confidence in Jesus? Doth it not obviate and silence all the complaints and objections of the broken and despairing spirit, and bring back to the Saviour that which was driven away? surely it does: —thus, from the grace of union, which renders Jesus

such an high-priest as becometh us, we obtain favour, and find grace to help us in every time of need. Salvation and perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord, by union with him, is that glorious truth, which first authorizes, encourages, and influences to believe; and that which preserves us spotless and acceptable unto God, when we fail to believe and credit his testimony; and infinitely above all other considerations, hath a tendency to raise us in our hope and confidence towards God; and to preserve us from desperation. It is therefore unjust and unnatural, to charge this doctrine with having a tendency to indulge people in unbelief. Considering the condition of man, and the testimony of Jesus, I would challenge all the masters of Israel to produce a system more powerfully tending to reconcile man unto God, and to raise the doubtful soul unto confidence in him. Let all such who, through the experience of human weakness, or the power of temptation, are fallen from the faith of the Son of God, and sunk to the hell of their senses, consider this matter, and renew their strength as eagles.

Furthermore, from the grace of union, we are taught to consider Jesus, as the glory of the Scriptures; all the members bring their tribute unto him, as the exalted head. If what I have already aimed at proving, is true; that primarily as the head of his body the church, all the promises were made unto him, all the threatenings fall upon him, &c.; then by him we

inherit, by him we have atoned; we claim no good out of him, nor will we acknowledge the evil; for as much as in him we have been purged. All the beauteous characters in the Scriptures are his, and are only typical in the persons unto whom they are given in the letter; which is abundantly evident, from the contrast appearing in every one of them, they being all guilty of vices diametrically opposite to the virtues for which they are famous; righteous Noah and Lot, both charged with drunkenness, and one with horrid incest: faithful Abraham with distrust, meanness of spirit, lying, or equivocating, as in the case of Sarah: meek Moses with unwarrantable passion, unadvised speech and such swellings at the waters of strife, as barred his entrance into the promised land; it charges holy David, the man after God's own heart, with such weaknesses and crimes, as are by no means consistent with holiness; but were a glaring proof of his heart being very unlike the heart of God: and Solomon, so famous for wisdom, had his dark side; how great were his follies! and whilst much might be said for his wisdom, how many instances might be given of the most stupid, and God-provoking foolishness in him? Job, also admired for his patience, gave the most pregnant proofs of impatience, and peevishness. It will be natural to enquire from hence, why the Scripture, which gives those men the most beautiful and amiable characters, as righteous, faithful, meek, holy, wise, and patient, should, at the same time pre-

sent us with a contrast in each of them, drawn in such strong colours, that the most palpable contradiction appears? the answer is easy; let God be true, and every man a liar. Those men were all types of Jesus, their characters figurative of his; therefore Divine wisdom thought proper, not only to stain their glory, by suffering such blemishes in their spirit and conduct, as gave the lie unto their virtues, but also to record the same; that at best they might appear but mere shadows, reserving the substance for Jesus. Therefore, whoso, reading the characters of those men, are not taught to look beyond them, unto the blessed Jesus, have yet read the Scriptures to little purpose, having not yet known them, nor the power of God. Neither the prophets, nor apostles, wrote with the view, that such who venerate their writings, should have their persons in admiration; neither theirs, whose character they drew as eminent and famous in the church of God; but the Spirit which moved them, designed, through the whole, the honour and glory of Jesus Christ: that passing on from every man, we might attain to the admiration of the person, and excellencies of Jesus, as the only righteous, the only faithful, the only meek, wise, holy, and patient, until all, with an unwavering tongue, shall cry, Thou art altogether lovely, worthy is the Lamb, of the kingdom and glory.

But lest any, who are used to please themselves with mankind, having men's persons in admiration,

should think we deal hardly with the saints of old, (for it is often found more dangerous, even among Christians, to speak lightly of pious men, than it is to speak so of Christ,) when we say that they were not the men which they are represented to be, their conduct and behaviour considered: I would here premise what will be equally obnoxious unto them, that those persons were really what the Scriptures say they were; that is, righteous, faithful, meek, holy, wise, patient, &c., without any exception: they were so in Christ. I know the Jew, however christianized, by profession, will either rave or sneer at this; but let him: he that sitteth in the heavens will laugh him to scorn, and the Christians, indeed, will remain undisturbed. I would calmly ask, what is the medium between Christ and man?—if it is not true of them in themselves, as I have shewn it is not; nor true of them in Christ, as the Greek and Jew insinuates; where is it true of them? It must have its truth somewhere: I speak unto you who acknowledge the Scriptures. I am well aware of your answer, viz. the Divine wisdom characterizes them according to what they were in part, and not in the whole. I would ask another question. Have we any other rule for the trial of right and wrong, good and evil, than the Divine law? and doth not that law demand perfection? doth it not, when broken in one point, declare the transgressor guilty of the whole? doth it not curse whomsoever continueth not to do all things

written in the book thereof? and Jesus saith, that heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of the law shall not fail, until the whole be fulfilled. But having spoken of this matter before, I refer you unto it; and shall only observe here, the arrogance and impropriety of assuming the character of righteous, meek, faithful, holy, &c., according to the works of our own hands or habits of the heart: this is flying in the face of God, and giving the lie to the Divine perfections as revealed in the law; yea, it is in fact a denying our only Lord God, and Jesus Christ: for unto what purpose is he made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; is it not that whosoever glorieth, should glory in the Lord? but when persons assume those characters from the consideration of what they are in part, as in themselves, they glory in themselves, and not in the Lord.

If we consider the bible-saints and their excellencies, in a figurative light, as I have already hinted, our Jesus will appear the sum and substance of all the Scriptures; or, if we respect them as being really in Christ what they are characterized in the letter, (for it is easily proved that they are not so in themselves,) he still hath the pre-eminence in all things; and every beautiful character given unto man in the Scriptures, is primarily his: as the substance of the shadow, or as the head, who, by union with the body, blesses all the members with his own condition and

character; whilst they, above all things, rejoice in his beauty, power, and excellencies. That one thing so greatly desired by the Psalmist, is granted unto all who discern their union with the head; namely, to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, to behold his beauty, and to enquire in his temple. Though the consideration of such a glorious salvation in Jesus, is infinitely refreshing and delightful, yet is there a higher felicity, consisting in the clear views of his personal beauties, and glories. Thus the elders who surround his throne, though perfected in his likeness, wearing crowns of glory, palms of victory, cast all their honours, and themselves likewise, before his feet; prostrating and singing incessantly, Worthy is the Lamb! thereby intimating, that his personal worth, dignity, and beauty, as beheld by them, is their highest heaven, their sublimest consolation. For this the Saviour prayed: Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory. Unto the eye of sense, there was neither form nor comeliness, whereby men should desire him, when in the day of his humiliation his judgment was taken away; when his face being more marred than any other man's, and his form more than the sons of men, he was pressed with our sicknesses, sins, and sorrows: then he appeared like the tabernacle of old, (as covered with badgers' skins) mean and contemptible, unto all such as judged according to appearance: but unto those who conceived aright

of his beauty and glory, even then, his form was most excellent and his comeliness perfect, the fairest of the sons of men; grace and truth was poured into his lips. My beloved, saith the spouse, is white and ruddy, the chief amongst ten thousand: yea, he is made the central point of all beauties and excellencies as when thus described; his head is as the most fine gold; his locks are bushy and black as a raven; his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set; his cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh; his hands are as gold rings set with the beryl; his belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires; his legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely. Thus gold, precious stones, ivory, marble, spices, flowers, trees, mountains, rivers, gums, birds, &c. are here collected, to form a composition of beauties, figurative of him: yea, whatsoever is seen in all the creation of God, all the excellencies and beauties, whether they are glories terrestrial or celestial, are figures of him; all transmitting their lustre to him, all pointing to him, as their perfection; and he, whose glory and honour was the ultimate end of their creation: all things were created by him, and for him, saith the Spirit. His beauties of holiness, how inexplicable! how divine! pure, without austerity; wise, without

vanity; humble, without meanness; self-denying, without self-love; holy, harmless, undefiled; purer than the heavens; holier than angels; he only is holy; he only is the Lord; such was his self-denial, that though he was rich, yet he became poor; though all honour, power, and glory was originally his, his name and character the most exalted; yea, without robbery, he was equal to the Most High, yet he took upon him the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation. Whilst the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, the Son of Man had no where to lay his head! as a stranger and pilgrim he passed through the world which his own hands had made, and unfeignedly felt the want of such necessaries and refreshments, which the creatures, from man to the reptile, yea, even to the smallest insect, through his providence, were abundantly supplied with. In all this he sought not himself, but through all, his unchangeable motto was, not my will, but thine be done! it being his meat and his drink to do the Father's will. Such was his self-denial, that though he was that Just One in his own individual self, was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens, yet was he content to be numbered amongst the transgressors, and to be accounted seditious, a rebel, a glutton, a wine bibber, a blasphemer, a deceiver, a demoniac, an encourager and ringleader of the most notorious sinners; unto those accusations he replied not, but by his silence, denying his holy

character, he seemingly acknowledged the charge exhibited against him. How beautiful his humility! he patiently endured the contradiction of sinners against himself. How conspicuous his love through the things which he suffered! many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it. His meekness, how apparent! When as a lamb led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers dumb, he opened not his mouth; when he was reviled he reviled not again, nor did he hide his face from shame and spitting, but calmly gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them who plucked off the hair. These, and every other God-like disposition and perfection, shining in him through his life and death, render him at once the object of wonder, delight, and pleasure; yea, such is his superlative beauty, that when we have considered all excellencies in heaven and in earth with the utmost exactness and impartiality, we are still, with relation to them all, constrained to cry, As the apple tree is among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. Surprisingly rare! one amongst thousands, yea, only one in all the wood; distinguished from all in fragrance, fruit, and shade. Well may every admiring worshipper say, I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

ESSAY

ON

APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

THE matter and manner of the apostles' preaching appears to be, when among Jews and Gentiles, that they taught Jesus Christ was the Messiah, the Son of God; and that he was crucified unto death, and on the third day rose again from the dead, for the forgiveness of sins, and the justification of mankind. And this they proved from the predictions of the prophets, from the pattern shewn unto Moses in the Mount, and by undoubted miracles wrought in the name of that Jesus whom they preached. All who believed their testimony were thereby assured of salvation: there were no such doubts as these among them then, viz. how do I know whether he died for me, or whether I am particularly interested in him, &c. Those queries and criticisms are of later date

than the apostolic age, and owe their existence unto the wisdom of this world: which, in the decline of true Christianity, took place of that primitive simplicity, with which the first preachers of Jesus bare witness of him. They had their rise from the distinctions made amongst men: as qualified or unqualified for the grace of the gospel; of fruitful, as having a right to believe their personal interest in Christ, or unfruitful, whose interest in him is doubtful. Those distinctions once concluded upon, between self-righteousness and ignorance of the Scriptures, have, from generation to generation, been carefully handed down; whilst all the world assented to them, as traditions of gracious men, taking it for granted, without impartial enquiry, that they were deducible from Scripture.

This, by degrees, rendered the things belonging to our peace so intricate, that the knowledge thereof was considered as wholly confined to the schools; and hence it was, that when a man believed the gospel report concerning Jesus Christ, namely, that he was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world; that he died and rose again for our justification; I say, when a man had believed this, he was yet taught to enquire, how do I know whether he died for me? Whether I am interested in him or not? Was I sure, says one, that I am predestinate, I could be easy. Says another, was I but sufficiently convinced and humbled, I could believe that Christ died for me. Says a third, could I but

perceive the fruits of the Spirit in me, the proper effects and obedience of faith, I could be assured of my interest in him.

Thus are mankind taught to establish their own righteousness; where, upon the authority of some goodness wrought by them, or found in them, they are directed to conclude of the love of God towards them, and of their personal interest in Christ. But what shall that man do, who is assured that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, is only evil continually;[1] whose goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away;[2] and that he is an unclean thing, and all his righteousness as filthy rags?[3] I say, what shall that man do, who by deep experience every day and hour, is sensible of those awful truths, and knows them applicable to every child of man? who has a continual sense of his poverty, misery, blindness, and nakedness? according to the forementioned traditions, he must despair and be damned everlastingly; for those traditions say, it will avail him nothing to believe all that the Bible reports of Jesus Christ, if he has not good works, good fruits in himself, as more corroborating evidence, more infallible recommendations unto God; yea, as more undeniable marks of his acceptance with him, than Jesus Christ; than his birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension. Let us only compare those conclusions with the Scriptures, and we

[1] Gen. vi, 5. [2] Hos. vi, 10. [3] Isa. lxiv, 9.

shall quickly perceive them to be the very sinews of Antichrist.

The apostle says, it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners:[1] but Antichrist says, you cannot be saved unless you are holy and good in yourself; nor shall the death and resurrection of Jesus profit you, except you are changed and made fruitful in all good works, words, and thoughts. The scripture saith, to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness:[2] Antichrist saith, that Christ doth not justify the ungodly, and that he justifies only such who are godly, who are repentant, humble, meek, loving righteousness, and hating iniquity. And where the fore-cited text shews us, that the faith of Christ is accounted for righteousness to all such who, working not, believe on him, as justifying the ungodly: Antichrist says, you are justified by your own believing, which will produce righteousness in you, to evidence it. The Scriptures say, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;[3] and that when we were enemies we were reconciled by the death of his Son;[4] and that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them:[5] but Antichrist saith, sinners have no right to conclude that Christ died for them; that

[1] Tim. i, 15. [2] Rom. iv, 5. [3] Rom. v, 8.
[4] Rom. v, 8. [5] 2 Cor. v, 19.

such as have this right, are distinguished from sinners by inherent holiness and gracious qualities. And it further saith, in contradiction to Christ, that he did not reconcile us to God when we were enemies, but that we must love him, fear him, and serve him, before we can be said to be reconciled to him. And as to man's being reconciled by the death of Jesus, it absolutely denies that, and says we are reconciled by being reformed, changed, and made conformable in heart and practice to God; and that until then, it is not true that God hath reconciled us unto himself in Christ, notwithstanding the apostle saith it. The Scriptures say, that we are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;[1] yea, expressly, by grace are ye saved:[2] but Antichrist says, there are terms and conditions to be complied with and fulfilled, before you can be saved. The apostle saith, that God hath given to us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son; and that he who believeth not this record, hath made God a liar.[3] But Antichrist says, all have not a right to believe; some because they are not predestinated, others because they are not qualified by repentance, &c.; others though they have believed, have no right to be assured, because they are not sufficiently fruitful: therefore, those cannot make God a liar, when they believed not, it being not required of them to believe a falsehood. Our Saviour censured such as trusted in themselves that they were righteous,

[1] Acts xv, 11. [2] Eph. ii, 8. [3] 1 John v, 10, 11.

and despised others: but Antichrist supports this character, and is constantly for distinguishing between saints and sinners; and that not from any rejoicing in Jesus Christ, which one hath above the other, but from the saints being more righteous than the sinners; more holy, devout, and wise. Our Saviour reproved the church of *Laodicea*, in the sharpest manner, for growing rich, and increasing in goods; for not retaining a just sense of her poverty, misery, blindness, and nakedness: but Antichrist says, you must increase in goods, you must grow rich, rich in wisdom, knowledge, holiness, goodness, virtue, and experience; and except you thus increase in goods, Christ shall profit you nothing. You were poor and miserable, and blind, and naked, says Antichrist, but not so now; you are converted, you are born again, you are changed; therefore how should you know yourself to be what you are not now however, whatever you have been.

The Spirit of truth says, Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: yea, saith Antichrist, but except you are made this in yourselves, you cannot be saved. Thus the traditions of man make void the word of God; and thus Antichrist warreth against Jesus, the Son of Mary. This is that Antichrist, whose coming was prophesied of, and who made his appearance as early as the days of the apostles. He ruined the labours of Paul, in Galatia, and made him complain

that all they who were in Asia were turned away from him; insomuch that this apostle, laborious and zealous for the glory of Jesus Christ, lived to see sundry of the churches, whom he had espoused to one husband, as a chaste virgin to Christ, overrun and spoiled by Antichrist. And indeed this and what followed, was foretold by him in his epistle to the Thessalonians, where he said, the day of Christ should not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. John also said, that Antichrist was in the world then, denying that Jesus was come in the flesh: or as it signifies, that he had finished the redemption of mankind, and consequently, taught men to look for him yet to come, in their flesh, under the notion of light, power, wisdom, faithfulness, humility, love, &c.

From the appearing of this Antichrist in the world, we may date the era of the apostasy, or falling away from the apostles' doctrine; when mankind began to entangle each other with their own inventions. The apostles, as I have hinted, preached the person of Christ, the simple facts of his death and resurrection, as justification and forgiveness of sins to the children of Adam. It was enough that their hearers believed their report of the crucified one; and, as I observed before, the persons thus believing never once ques-

tioned but it was for them, because hitherto they had not been taught that any were excluded from it. Antichrist had not as yet the boldness to affirm, that there were some amongst mankind, who, though they heard of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, yea, though they believed it, yet had no right to conclude it was for them. Nor had he as yet propagated that subtle distinction, between the belief of the truth, and the knowledge of their personal interest therein. For in those days of undisguised truth and simplicity, when any man believed the testimony of the apostles concerning Jesus, his heart exulted in the truth, nothing doubtful of his interest therein. The belief of the truth, and the purged conscience, were then inseparable. For the testimony is not only that Christ died and rose again, such as we might hear of some other person, as Lazarus; but the truth is, that he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification; insomuch, that believing the truth, necessarily implies the knowledge of our personal interest in Christ; the latter is always in proportion to the former. To distinguish between the belief of the truth, and the knowledge of our interest therein, is the invention of a spirit, who, professing Christianity, would not be thought to be an unbeliever; but at the same time, having not the testimony of a good conscience, the inward witness, which the Scriptures affirm to be the case with such who believe; but still retaining a conscience of sin, he was obliged to scheme this distinc-

tion, to keep up his credit as a believer; yet such a one as was doubtful of his personal interest in the truth believed. Yea, and to ward off all censure on this account, this doubtfulness must be nourished, and cherished, and strongly recommended to others, as prudent, religious fear, from which we are very rarely to be delivered; and that only in proportion to our fruitfulness, as the effects of the truth believed. And to make this the more plausible, it is insinuated, that the greatest danger lies on the side of a confident believing: signifying that men are rather damned for believing, (which is called presuming,) than for doubting. Thus from every quarter, Antichrist aims, by his traditions, at making void the word of God.

It is very suprising to observe, after a person hath made a great bustle about Christ, and raised a dust, by proposing a truth to be believed, unclogged with any conditions whatsoever in the person believing; requiring no other qualification in him than what is naturally common to mankind; and that the truth which is thus to be believe, is none other than the simple fact of Christ's death and resurrection;— I say after proposing this, and quarrelling with all the world about it, giving the hardest names, even unto such as only differed unhappily in the mode of expression, to find such a one sink to this, that a man may believe the fore-cited truth, and not know his interest in it; yea, have no interest at all in it; and that such as have, can only know it by their fruits. This gives

us a striking prospect of anti-christian policy, and makes us suspect the intention, where it is proposed, to exalt Christ alone. The Scriptures assure us, that mankind, as sinners, are interested in the death and resurrection of Christ; therefore, to apprehend and believe that truth properly, is to believe our personal interest in him. If it should be objected, that Christ doth not now say to any individual, Thy sins are forgiven thee; I answer, he doth; for what he said unto one he said unto every one who believeth it; otherwise we may say there is nothing in the Scriptures said unto us, the Old Testament being written unto the Jews, the New Testament, some to one church, and some to another, but none to us; if we have not a right to believe that what Christ said unto them he said unto us. But that we can *only* know our interest in Christ by our fruits is, first, a denial of the witness of the Spirit, except it is supposed that he bears witness by those things, and not by Christ, which, by the way, is to speak of himself, and to prove himself a spirit of error. Again, it is to make our goodness essential to the knowledge of our salvation; which is a manifest going about to establish our own righteousness, as the medium at least, whereby we believe, and a contradiction to the scripture, which saith, To him who worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Again, it makes void the law, by not adhering to its determination, concerning good and evil; for were we

always to determine of our good and evil by the perfect law, it would be much more easy, with the greatest pretender to piety, to number his good fruits than it is to find them. Was this but truly considered amongst mankind, we should not have such proud boastings and pretensions to know this and the other matter, by their good works, and holy fruits, as we have in the world. I might say it smells much stronger of the church of Rome, (if it does not look a little towards Deism,) than of the Protestant faith; but as that would be saying nothing to such as think the Romish faith true, and the Protestant wrong; I shall content myself with saying, that it is a flat contradiction of the apostles' testimony, as I have, in part, and shall yet farther shew: though it would fain shelter itself under their authority. Where these, and the like suggestions of Antichrist, take place in any heart, the consequences are shocking: as to such who are vain enough to imagine themselves fruitful in themselves, and from thence to draw conclusions; as they must first make to themselves a new law, before they can thus think: so must they of necessity be puffed up, and come into the character of the self-righteous. And, as to such who are not sufficiently vain to think themselves thus fruitful; as they cannot know their interest in Christ, there remains nought for them but misery and fear; though they have this consolation, to be taught that unbelief and gloom, is a much less dangerous state than an unshaken confidence. It is

easily seen, that those propositions are calculated to multiply and increase the perplexities, doubts, and objections of mankind, against the gospel of Jesus: therefore is it that we have many more of those in the world now, than in the first ages of Christianity.*

The apostles preached Jesus and his benefits, promiscously, to sinners, and did not straiten his grace, by shewing that there were some who had no right to it, from their being unqualified; but by Divine authority they preached the gospel to every creature; and every man who was a sinner, yea, whether he knew himself such or not, (for they spake of things as true with God, and not according to the conceptions of men,) to be sufficiently qualified, and had an indisputable right to conclude the Saviour's death and

* It is not meant to be denied that the same Spirit which produces faith in the hearts of those who believe, produces afterwards many fruits of that faith, such as hope, joy, peace, &c , and an alacrity in adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things before the world: so that during the exercise of any of these subsequent acts the believer has in his heart an additional evidence to that furnished by the written record, that he is a child of God. But as all these fruits subsequent to faith, spring out of faith, and are only vigorous as faith itself is vigorous; and further as all these fruits are, from various causes, whether of remaining corruption within us, or from the cares and anxieties of our worldly circumstances, more or less transitory and evanescent, it becomes a matter of the highest importance to the permanent peace of the believer that he should perceive, that in the darkest hour of spiritual despondency, the simple record in the Gospel is a sufficient warrant at all times for him to trust to it. Other evidences there may or may not be, but the truth is always there, and that is sufficient.—EDIT.

resurrection, his justification unto life. And this much is to be understood by the apostles' assertions: We preach Christ crucified. And again, We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and with great power, gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all. And again, He preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. Thus, the apostles dwelt altogether upon the fact of Christ's death and resurrection, amongst Jews and Greeks, as the alone salvation of mankind. And what Paul himself thought of it, is evident from that heart-exultation of his: Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again. Thus the resurrection of Jesus, without the consideration of any other matter in heaven or in earth, was the joy of his heart; yea, all his hope, and all his salvation. He shewed, that the fact of Christ's resurrection, was his exemption from condemnation; he viewed it, and rejoiced in it as such. And without doubt, what he apprehended to be truth, he preached unto others, as he sought not himself in the things which he spake: the glory of the Lord Jesus, and the happiness of his fellow-creatures, being that which he had always on view, in preaching the kingdom of God. As to mankind, the apostles thought them sufficiently qualified, (as being all concluded under sin,) for the grace which they preached. They were taught to drop all distinctions, and no longer to consider men as

clean and unclean, as chosen and rejected; for saith Peter, "The Lord hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." This was not because mankind were reformed, and better now, than when God taught the Jews to respect the Gentiles as common and unclean, which he did under the law, where he forbad the Jews to have any connection with the Gentiles; and if it was not owing to any change in the Gentiles that they were now received, and were no longer to be considered as common and unclean, the query is, what is it owing to? I answer, it was unto the death and resurrection of Jesus; for it was there that God had cleansed them. Therefore was it that when Peter refused to eat in the vision of the sheet, saying, Nothing that was unclean had at any time come into his mouth, he was answered, Call not thou that common and unclean which God hath cleansed. Thus was he taught that mankind, who in themselves are unclean, were cleansed of God in Christ Jesus; according to which cleansing he was instructed to respect them, and that he ought not any more to call any man common or unclean. Therefore, it was the business of the apostles to tell the people what God had done for them, namely, that he had loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood.

Thus, as to matter and manner, did the first witnesses of Jesus preach his salvation unto the children of men. For when they tell us, that they preached

the Son of God; that they preached Christ Jesus the Lord; Christ crucified, &c., without meddling with the character and the conditions of those unto whom they preached, to point them out as qualified or unqualified for the reception of the truth;—I say, this their matter and manner of preaching, plainly shows, that they did not aim at making a schism in the body by dividing head and members, as having separate interests; but they aimed at shewing that the interest of the head, was that of the members; therefore was it, that holding the head, they constantly preached his excellence, his labours, triumphs, and honours, that the people, as his members, hearing of it, might hear of their own salvation and grace: because the glory which is given unto him, as the head, he gives unto us, as his members. From this union it appears, that hearing and believing of Christ, according to the apostles' testimony, we hear and believe, what truly relates unto ourselves. And thus did they, by preaching the obedience, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus, preach the salvation of mankind in him; thus lifting him up that he might draw all men unto him; and that they might espouse the people unto this one husband, as chaste virgins unto this Jesus. They were cautious of meddling with the characters of their hearers, as Jews or Gentiles, as repentant or unrepentant; lest by making a distinction, those who thought themselves on the favourable side of the question, should be lifted up, and their

minds be adulterated, and rendered unchaste to the crucified One. Nay, they had always caustics at hand, for the proud flesh of their disciples, wherever they saw it rising; and this they applied without fear, or having the persons of men in respect, whenever they saw occasion. We see how careful Paul was, in this particular, from his reproving Peter, for giving the least occasion to the Jews to glory in the flesh, and keep up a distinction which God had before shown him an end of; thus he actually forbad him to call that common and unclean, which God had cleansed.

This is a short specimen of the apostles' matter and manner of preaching; and, according to my apprehension, it is obvious that they had the union between Christ and the people in view when they thus preached.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus! make no long tarrying, O my God!

THE END.

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